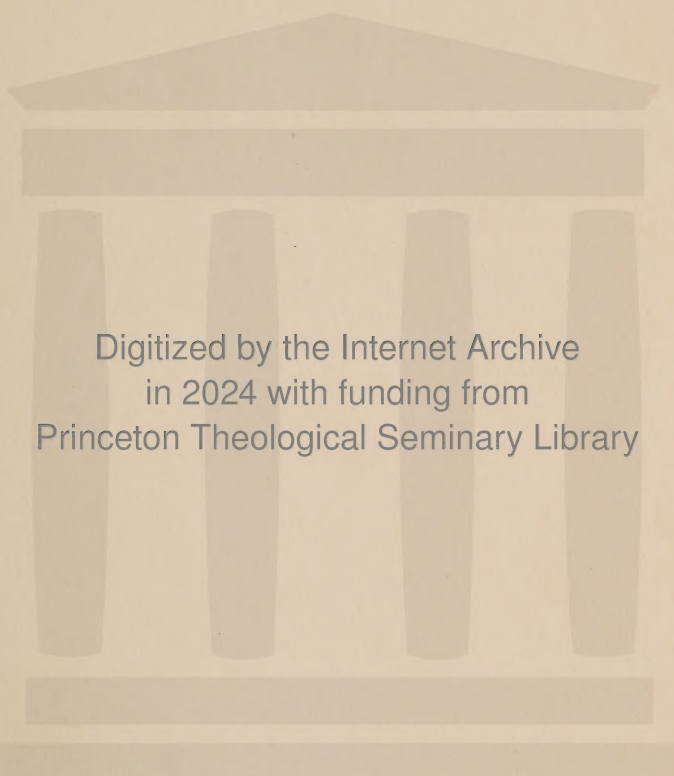


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JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES

*The Putney Community*









JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES

About 1850

# JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES

## *The Putney Community*

*Compiled and Edited by*  
GEORGE WALLINGFORD NOYES

*With Twenty-four Illustrations*



ONEIDA, NEW YORK

1931

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS DUE  
IRENE CAMPBELL NOYES  
FOR HER VALUABLE AID  
AS ADVISER AND CRITIC



## Introduction

THE biography of John Humphrey Noyes falls logically into three parts, his ancestry and early life, the Putney Community, the Oneida Community.

Of these the first has been published.<sup>1</sup> It tells the story of Noyes's conversion to evangelical Christianity, his studies in Calvinistic theology, his adoption of the heresy "Perfectionism," his flounderings in legality and antinomianism, his discovery as he believed of the "strait and narrow way" that led between these quagmires to the solid ground of inward freedom from sin, and his determination to embody this inward freedom from sin in outward social forms.

The Putney Community was Noyes's preliminary social laboratory. Its career from 1838 to 1847 included the working out of the theory of "Bible Communism," the selecting and training of a personnel, the slow advance on a small scale through communism of property and communism of households to communism of love, the consequent explosion at Putney, the migration to Oneida.

With the founding of the Oneida Community Noyes entered upon the full embodiment of his religious principles in a society large enough to bring the major passional forces into play, surrounded by pioneers inclined to tolerance, endowed with sufficient capital and skill to give a reasonable prospect of material stability, actuated by an earnestness that enabled it to overcome readily the obstacles to partial association, and

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1923.



## Introduction

prepared by fourteen years of Perfectionist discipline to encounter the tremendous difficulties of entire Bible Communism.

While each of these parts of Noyes's biography is in a way complete in itself, yet the story is a unit. Therefore the author calls attention to *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes* as containing the philosophic and psychologic springs of The Putney Community.

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JOHN HUMPHREY NOYES

*The Putney Community*



## Chapter 1

### THE BATTLE-AXE LETTER

THE autumn of 1837 was pivotal for Noyes. A year previous he had reached the nadir of his career. He was an outcast. Perfectionism was in ruins. But having completed his theological buttressing of salvation from sin, he had during the intervening months turned his attention from the religious to the social aspect of Christianity; had broken fellowship with those whom he thought responsible for the downfall of Perfectionism; had asserted his own claim to divinely-commissioned leadership; had gathered a small group of faithful disciples at Putney, Vermont; had obtained a hearing from Finney, Garrison, the Beechers and other influential persons, who seemed about to render a verdict of approval; had commenced publication of *The Witness* at Ithaca, New York, subscriptions to which immediately foreshadowed success. At the very culmination of his "reanimated hope" a wholly unexpected event brought a new and highly explosive force into his maturing scheme of social Christianity.

At the beginning of Noyes's religious leadership, in February 1834, the first person to join with him in a public assertion of salvation from sin was Abigail Merwin. She was thirty, he twenty-two. She had dark hair and eyes, was beautiful and talented. Noyes always held that her persuasiveness and argumentative power more than any other influence gained entrance for him and his doctrine into the New Haven Free Church, which became the cradle of Perfectionism. She later denied this. However it is certain that from February until May 1834 these two were in the closest coöperation developing and launching the faith of salvation from sin. During all this time, Noyes says, their attention was not on each other but on Christ. Nevertheless a "wonderful weaving of attractions was going on," and before the end of this period he was desperately in love.

In May 1834 Noyes was drawn away from New Haven to New York City, where he passed through a period of mental turmoil



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the purpose of which he believed was to free him from life-long habits of legality.<sup>1</sup> What he called his "unfashionable behavior" during this crisis gave rise to the fear even among his relatives and friends that he was insane. Among other psychopathic symptoms he beheld Abigail Merwin standing on the pinnacle of the universe in the glory of an angel, but heard a voice from which he could not turn away pronouncing her "Satan transformed into an angel of light." He gave her up "as one accursed." Hearing these rumors Abigail's brother-in-law Everard Benjamin, also a convert, went to New York and brought Noyes back to New Haven. Noyes afterward learned that Abigail had accompanied her brother-in-law, and had concealed her presence on the boat, a circumstance which chimed in suspiciously with his vision. A month later she with several others was received back into the Free Church.

The shock of Abigail's defection was terrific. Noyes said later that it was years before God could command his attention without his looking over his shoulder to that woman. He longed for reconciliation, but his vision of her in New York was too great an obstacle. At length in the course of a second series of trials at Prospect he saw her "clothed in white robes," and by the word of the Lord she was given to him. At this same time he was "instructed as to the place which the marriage relation will hold in the coming dispensation." From this new standpoint he sought and obtained an interview. She claimed to be still a Perfectionist and to have confidence in his religious character. He called again, and had much conversation with her. But rumors of his strange adventures in New York were still in circulation, and she seemed embarrassed and prejudiced. Her father forbade him the house. Afterward Noyes wrote her an impassioned letter.<sup>2</sup> There was no reply. Finally she reopened correspondence with a former lover, Merit Platt. The long-awaited word that they were married came to Noyes early in January 1837. Subsequently he learned that they had gone to live at Ithaca, New York. Thither Noyes marched on foot from Kingston,<sup>3</sup> a distance of 140 miles, "for the purpose on the one hand of starting the paper and the Kingdom of God in the center of New York State, and on the other of pursuing and confronting Abigail Merwin, who had deserted her post as my helper."

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 136-152.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 351-354.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 339-350.

## The Battle-Axe Letter

On January 15, 1837, under the sting of Abigail's marriage to Merit Platt, Noyes wrote to his intimate friend, David Harrison, the so-called Battle-Axe Letter. The main part of that letter<sup>1</sup> was an expression of Noyes's unwavering faith and patience and a militant assertion of his claim to leadership in view of the impending establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The concluding paragraph which brought such far-reaching social consequences was this:

I will write all that is in my heart on one delicate subject, and you may judge for yourself whether it is expedient to show this letter to others. When the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven there will be no marriage. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarreling have no place at the marriage supper of the Lamb. God has placed a wall of partition between man and woman during the apostasy for good reasons; this partition will be broken down in the resurrection for equally good reasons. But woe to him who abolishes the law of the apostasy before he stands in the holiness of the resurrection! I call a certain woman my wife. She is yours, she is Christ's, and in him she is the bride of all saints. She is now in the hands of a stranger, and according to my promise to her I rejoice. My claim upon her cuts directly across the marriage covenant of this world, and God knows the end.

Harrison kept this letter several months. "But," said he, "the Lord gave me no liberty to suppress it." He showed it first to Simon Lovett, who liked it and asked permission to take it home. While it was at his house Elizabeth H., a young Perfectionist firebrand, insisted upon having it to send to T. R. Gates<sup>2</sup> of Philadelphia. She threatened, if denied, to leave immediately on foot in a terrific thunderstorm for New Haven seven miles away. The letter went. Anticipating that Gates would publish it Harrison would have written forbidding him, but "could not get the Lord's consent."

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 306-309.

<sup>2</sup> Gates's career as a Perfectionist has been described in *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 203-207, 241-243, 300-301.

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In July of this same year T. R. Gates commenced the publication of a paper called *The Battle-Axe and Weapons of War* to launch his own theory of the sexual relation in the Kingdom of God. He wrote in the first number:

Among the fashions of this world that will pass away is that of man and wife, so called, living in strife and disagreement. . . . A person should not rest content in such a condition a single day. . . . Men and women had better change their partners twenty times over, under the best regulations they can make with each other, so as at length to have one with whom they can live in harmony and be in the order of God, than to live in any kind of strife and disagreement and be in the order of the devil. . . . In accordance with this new, more heavenly condition of things, myself and she that was my wife after the fashion of this world have mutually dissolved and forever renounced everything pertaining to such a fashion, and are hereafter to live together only as it is our free and mutual choice so to do.

The second number of *The Battle-Axe and Weapons of War* came out in August 1837. Blazoned on the first page was Noyes's letter to Harrison in full. Gates took copies to the Philadelphia City Hall, and laid one upon the Mayor's desk. The Mayor, glancing at the title, remarked, "We do not use such weapons here." Nothing daunted, Gates distributed the paper among the lawyers, magistrates and editors of the city, and even sold it in the streets with a placard on his hat.

### NOYES IN *The Witness* SEPTEMBER 23, 1837

Several persons have written to inquire whether I or Mr. Boyle <sup>1</sup> was the author of a letter lately published in *The Battle-Axe and Weapons of War*. I answer, I am the author but not the publisher of the letter. As a lover of the light I cannot object to its publication; and as an optimist I am bound to

<sup>1</sup> For Boyle's connection with Perfectionism see *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*.

## The Battle-Axe Letter

rejoice. Yet I must be permitted to say that it contains doctrines and allusions which I should never have obtruded upon the public, not for fear of persecution or reproach but lest my liberty should become a stumbling-block to others. Since it is published, it is proper that I should acknowledge myself its author that I may "bear my own burden;" and I hereby entirely exculpate Mr. Boyle from any censure which may fall upon it. In due time, if it is demanded, I intend to explain fully the doctrines and allusions of that letter. . . .

I see by communications from all quarters that my letter is regarded as "an astounding testimony." As I am not responsible for its publication I might easily escape in a measure the fury of the storm which must follow it, but I choose to "bide its brunt," and therefore say that I know the doctrine of that letter is God's truth, and that whosoever contends with it "rushes upon the thick bosses of His buckler." Before the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven that doctrine will be preached on the house-tops, and its practical tendency not to confusion and licentiousness but to "whatsoever is pure and lovely and of good report" will be discerned. If the unlearned and unstable wrest it to their own destruction, they shall never say that I did not once and again point them to the red beacon of wrath which God has placed at the head of the way of uncleanness: ☞ *"Woe to him who abolishes the law of the apostasy before he stands in the holiness of the resurrection."*

If the tendency of the doctrine is to be judged by the actions of him who teaches it, truth requires that I should testify as under oath, using an expression of John Bunyan's, that "I know not whether there is a woman in the world otherwise than by their dress and common report;" and I can say without fear of contradiction to those who have familiarly known my ways, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly



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and unblamably I have walked among you." Liberty never metamorphoses the children of God into swine. If any become swine in consequence of learning the law of liberty, they are only hypocrites made manifest.

*The Advocate of Moral Reform* NEW YORK CITY  
DECEMBER 15, 1837

Sentiments have of late been openly advanced by those who call themselves Perfectionists of such an immoral and destructive tendency, that it becomes our duty as humble conservators of the public morals to bear a decided testimony against them, particularly as the names of some among us have been coupled with this dangerous and seductive heresy. To those who are happily ignorant of the name and nature of Perfectionism we fear we shall hardly be able to make ourselves intelligible; for we shrink from the task of disturbing this stagnant pool of corruption even for the sake of warning the unwary from its brink. . . .

In some recent publications by the leaders of this sect the institution of marriage is set aside as a part of the system of bondage from which Christ is to make us free. We will not stain our pages with specimens of this reasoning, which makes the blessed Redeemer the minister of sin, and converts the bread of life into a deadly poison. Indeed the language so much resembles the jargon under which the ancient mystics used to veil their meaning, that our readers probably would not understand at once its full import. From the words of our Savior concerning the inhabitants of heaven, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage," they argue the abolition of the institution here in a resurrection state which, it seems, some of them have already attained. It will at once be seen that this master-stroke of satanic policy opens a floodgate to every species of licentiousness; and by a refinement of wickedness

## The Battle-Axe Letter

which puts papacy to the blush sanctifies the very incarnation of impurity. A state of society such as these doctrines would inevitably produce cannot be adequately conceived or described. The sacredness of the domestic constitution invaded, the marriage covenant annulled, parental and filial obligations trampled in the dust, while unbridled license stalks among the ruins, smiling at the havoc she has made, and feasting on the last bleeding remnants of chastity and virtue! Surely, when sentiments like these are advocated under the mask of high-toned piety, it is the duty of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity to contend earnestly for the purity of "the faith once delivered to the saints. . . ."

NOYES TO THE EDITRESS OF *The Advocate of Moral Reform*

Ithaca, New York, April 5, 1838.

An article in your paper of December 15, 1837, on the subject of Perfectionism has just fallen under my observation. . . . I will endeavor to state in such language as shall repudiate your charge of mysticism those peculiar views in regard to marriage which have occasioned your denunciations.

1. I believe that marriage does not exist in heaven.
2. I believe that the will of God will be done on earth as it is done in heaven; consequently that a time will come when marriage will not exist on earth.
3. I believe that for the present transition period proper instruction for believers is contained in the 7th chapter of 1st Corinthians, especially verses 29-31.<sup>1</sup>
4. I believe that in the heavenly state, which is the hope of our calling, the Holy Spirit takes the place of written

<sup>1</sup> "But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away."

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laws and arbitrary ceremonies in the relation of the sexes and all other matters.

5. I do *not* believe that any have attained to that state who are now on earth.

6. I believe that such as make these doctrines a cloak of licentiousness are wholly ignorant of the true nature of the doctrines and will share the doom of Sodom and Gomorrah.

7. I believe that such as impede the true tendency of these doctrines by misrepresenting them and trusting in written laws instead of the Holy Spirit are also wholly ignorant of the subjects they handle and will ere long be found fighting against God.

You will find in my writings no such doctrine on the subject of law as you impute to Perfectionists. I regard the law as a map of duty, and God a living Guide. Righteousness is the aim of both. The law is declared by the Bible and all experience to be ineffectual; God, the living Guide, is declared by the same witnesses to be all-sufficient. God's leadership exercised through Christ by love without law<sup>1</sup> is with me the core of the gospel; and for this reason chiefly I feel bound to contend earnestly for the above doctrines on marriage.

JOHN H. NOYES.

NOYES IN *The Witness* NOVEMBER 21, 1838

I commenced publication of *The Witness* in August 1837 under circumstances that warranted, so far as human promises and favor can warrant anything, the expectation of its continuance without interruption. That same month a private letter written by me to David Harrison was fraudulently published in *The Battle-Axe and Weapons of War* by T. R. Gates, I say "fraudulently," because from the manner of its publication it was natural to infer, as most of those who read

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, p. 382.

## The Battle-Axe Letter

it did infer, that it was written to Gates, an inference which tended to involve me against my will in a partnership of sentiment. In consequence of this forgery I lost many friends and gained many enemies.<sup>1</sup> This was immediately manifest in the diminution of my receipts from subscribers. Finding myself unable to proceed without incurring debt,<sup>2</sup> I left my affairs at Ithaca in the hands of A. H. Elston and went to New York. At first I was received with much welcome by William Green notwithstanding the unpopularity of the Battle-Axe Letter. But after remaining a few days at his house I was rejected as an impostor. Thence I went to Kingston, and abode with Abram C. Smith through the winter.

NOYES IN *The Oneida Circular* AUGUST 24, 1874

It is important to observe that the theory broached in the Battle-Axe Letter is not spiritual affinity between two but communism. The usual landing-place of religious speculators, when they move out of ordinary legal marriage, is in spiritual affinity between two. This is Swedenborg's substitute for marriage, as it is that of the Spiritualists generally; and this was the hobby of the New York Perfectionists, with whom I was much associated during the three years when I was studying the sexual question. But I did not stop in this half-way system. Perhaps I would have done so if I had formed my theory and committed myself to it in the early part of that period of study when my heart was most under the special attraction to Abigail Merwin. But I was kept quiet and searching till I could rise above personal passion and see clearly the spirit

<sup>1</sup> The later history of the Gates movement is told in *Theophilus the Battle-Axe* by Charles Coleman Sellers, Ardmore, Pa.

<sup>2</sup> Noyes was already in debt for the second and third numbers of *The Witness*, also for board. In this situation he received a letter from Harriet A. Holton enclosing eighty dollars, which enabled him to pay his debts and leave.



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of Pentecost presiding over the love of heaven. I well remember the spiritual lift by which I rose and reached the great idea of a universal marriage, and I wrote the letter to Harrison immediately after that lift. It will be seen by a careful reading of the letter, that when I got this enlargement I communized my claim on Abigail Merwin.

The theory of absolute communism in love was never before so far as I know broached in this world. The Primitive Church left on record only the negative doctrine of no marriage in the resurrection, and this was liable to be mistaken for Shakerism, as it has been by the Catholics and religionists generally. And all the positive theories of the sexual relation that I know of are theories of limited affinity which is really marriage.

"It is difficult at the present time," wrote Noyes in 1874, "to conceive of the shock which the Battle-Axe Letter produced. I was caught in the snare of a confidential whisper and hung up as a gazing-stock to the world. While I recognized the hand of God in the publication of the letter, I verily felt as though he had taken a fearful advantage of me and committed me to an awful step against my will. I am not sure that I should ever have broached our sexual theory of my own free motion."

The effect of these strange events upon his future Noyes almost immediately divined. On October 13, 1837, he wrote to Harrison: "You will not suffer anything that I have said in *The Witness* about the publication of my letter in *The Battle-Axe* to trouble you. God made a most glorious move on the checker-board in that thing." And reviewing the history of the Battle-Axe Letter in 1874 he concluded: "From the time of the publication of that letter I felt that I was called, even under the heaviest penalties, to defend and ultimately carry out the doctrine of communism in love. I accepted the commission with a good heart."

## Chapter 2

### A RESURRECTION MARRIAGE

**A**BIGAIL separated from her husband about the first of December 1837, and never lived with him again. She returned shortly to her father's home at Orange, Connecticut. Noyes remained at Ithaca "as long as she did," though he was not informed of her movements until he reached Kingston.

NOYES TO ABIGAIL

Kingston, December 12, 1837.

*Beloved:*

In the latter part of December 1835 I sent you the enclosed letter <sup>1</sup> in substance. As I received no reply, I am not certain that it ever reached you. If you have read the papers I have lately published, you will perceive that I am under the necessity of presenting that letter to the public unless testimony of another kind supersedes it. I am unwilling to proceed without ascertaining your position. I would not expose you to undeserved reproach, though I cannot shrink from telling the whole truth when as in this case it is demanded. My confidence in God concerning you is still complete, and I rejoice in the assurance that the dénouement of our tragi-comedy is at hand. Your reply to this will probably decide the issue.

You will learn from the bearer, Abram C. Smith, whatever else may be needed in relation to my affairs.

Your lover in the Lord,

J. H. NOYES.

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 351-354.

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For some unexplained reason the above letter was not delivered. In a letter to David Harrison inviting him to come to Kingston for a visit Noyes wrote early in March 1838: "If you should come, be sure to ascertain where Abigail is. The last I heard of her she had been absent from Ithaca a long time. I have become contented to play at hide and coop with her as long as God pleases."

NOYES TO DAVID HARRISON

Kingston, March 23, 1838.

*Dear Brother:* . . . .

With respect to Abigail I say still, God knows the end. I do not. Many things strongly indicate that the end is not far off. My mind concerning her is not changed, save that I love her more and more, and am daily more fully persuaded of God that she is worthy and in due time will be proved so, though I have been long reconciled to suspense. I desire to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in relation to her, whatever it may be. If you can see her, you are authorized to make known to her my mind and circumstances as far as you know them, leaving her and the Lord to determine what course it is right and expedient for her to pursue. If God does not bring to pass his strange act by her, he will by somebody else soon. The Kingdom of God is swiftly advancing to its predicted collision with the kingdoms of this world. Like two mighty ships they are coming to a crash, which will shatter and sink one of them. The timbers that bear the blow must expect a crushing shock.

Yours in the Lord,

J. H. NOYES.

While Harrison was executing this commission Noyes returned to Ithaca with the purpose of resuming publication of *The Witness*. He found there in the post-office letters from Harriet A. Holton containing sums of five and ten dollars, which she had sent during the winter.

## A Resurrection Marriage

NOYES TO HARRIET A. HOLTON

Ithaca, April 3, 1838.

*Dear Sister:*

I write you at this time because after reading the letters which you sent here in the winter and learning the full extent of your liberality my heart bleeds for you, and I am in a sort of hurry to make some return. I beseech you for the Lord's sake either to stay your hand and stop running me in debt, or to make me sure that you look at my heart and not at my outward works for evidence that your generosity is not misplaced. Else you will tempt me to seek to please you and not the Lord, and in so doing I should indeed become unworthy of your kindness. . . .

I am in the midst of a mighty contest between God's love and Satan's malice. The one heals as often as the other wounds. Woe after woe rolls over me, and alternately joy after joy. But love prevails, and I plainly see my salvation nearer than when I believed. God gives us "the valley of Achor for a door of hope." If we long for victory, we must long for battle. My hope of full deliverance stretches across "the valley of decision," in which the righteous shall be forever separated from the wicked. Till then I "stand in jeopardy every hour." My daily feeling is that I shall either be killed or crowned soon.

Please send information about me to Putney.

Your brother,

J. H. NOYES.

DAVID HARRISON TO NOYES

Meriden, Connecticut, April 17, 1838.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

I have just returned from Kingston, where I have had a profitable visit with Brothers Smith and Lyvere. "The Devil has come down having great wrath, knowing that he has but a

## The Putney Community

short time." The signs of the times are indicative of consequences of amazing interest. It seems hardly possible but that Satan's kingdom will soon receive a mortal thrust.

I called (as Smith wrote you) upon Abigail, and when I came away from Smith's house I took with me the communication you wrote for him to carry last winter, partly expecting to present that, but the Lord overruled it. The more I think of it, the more I am persuaded that she is entertaining the subject.

DAVID HARRISON TO HARRIET A. HOLTON

Meriden, Connecticut, April 18, 1838.

*Dear Miss Holton:*

By his [Noyes's] permission I called on Abigail, and presented to her two letters which he wrote me. She consented to read them, and seemingly with some degree of interest. She is at her father's, where she has been for a number of months. The specific object with all its bearings, which God has in mind in this thing, is probably not known to any, even to Brother Noyes. But I verily believe that not only some glorious truths will be developed by it, but that the faithfulness of Brother Noyes will yet be proved to all the saints, to those that shall come after us, and to the world.

Your brother,

DAVID HARRISON.

After this non-committal reception of his overtures Noyes quietly accepted the inevitable. In less than two months his plans had undergone a complete change.

NOYES'S FAREWELL LAY TO ABIGAIL

I will not give you back your heart,  
I've wooed and fairly won it,  
And sooner with my life I'll part,  
You may depend upon it.







HARRIET A. (HOLTON) NOYES

*W. L. Derby*

## A Resurrection Marriage

You say your heart is still your own,  
But words will never prove it.  
What God and you and I have done  
Will stand; the world can't move it.

So go your way, and I'll go mine.  
I care not where you wander.  
The branch's roots are in the vine;  
They'll ne'er be torn asunder.

We'll meet again, be sure of that,  
Sometime 'twixt now and never.  
An age or two I well may wait,  
Since we are one forever.

The fact that Harriet A. Holton<sup>1</sup> had given unstinted personal devotion and money when Noyes's fortunes were at lowest ebb now brought her, despite her diffidence, into the center of the Perfectionist stage.

She was born in Springfield, Vermont, November 28, 1808. Her maternal grandfather was Mark Richards, a nephew of the New England theologian, Dr. Samuel Hopkins. Mr. Richards had been Lieutenant Governor of Vermont and a member of Congress. William C. Bradley, eminent as a lawyer, scholar and statesman, was an uncle by marriage.

Harriet was an only child, and having been left an orphan at an early age was adopted by her grandparents. She had an excellent mind, not brilliant, but cool and perspicacious, and she received for the times a good education. After leaving school she was for a number of years under Unitarian influences, but in 1831 at the age of 23 she was converted to revivalism. Her diary records this change with characteristic brevity: "In a protracted meeting I came to the conclusion to devote my life to God."

In her eighteenth year she became engaged to Edmund Burke, a young law student in her uncle Bradley's office. The bitter Adams-Jackson presidential campaign was in progress. Harriet's grand-

<sup>1</sup> This account of Harriet A. Holton's early life is drawn from Harriet H. Skinner's serial "A Community Mother," published in *The Circular*.—G. W. N.

## The Putney Community

father had political differences with her lover, and turned him out of the house, threatening to disinherit her if she married him. She told her grandfather that he might do as he chose with his property, but she would never let money govern her affections. For several years she kept faith with her lover in defiance of her grandfather. But in 1831 she told Mr. Burke that she had given her heart to God, and wished to be released from her engagement. He replied that he was a Unitarian and it was she who had made him one. He sought to hold her. They exchanged letters and parted. Meanwhile her grandfather, convinced that he had gone too far in his dictation, reinstated her in favor and resolved never again to interfere with her affairs of the heart.

Harriet now joined the Congregational Church, and for three years devoted herself to the accepted duties of a religious profession. But she suffered from self-condemnation and longed to overcome sin. One day a friend told her of a Mr. Noyes of Putney who was teaching that sin could be entirely overcome by faith in Christ. "Many think he is crazy," said the woman, "but what I have heard of his belief has set me thinking." The remark caught in Harriet's mind. Soon afterward her most intimate friend, Maria Clark, came to see her, full of the subject of salvation from sin. She had heard Noyes preach and had seen some of his writings. When she returned home, she sent Harriet a copy of Noyes's article on the second coming of Christ. Harriet was convinced. Not long afterward she publicly declared herself saved from sin.

Harriet was twenty-six when she became a Perfectionist. The church spared no pains to draw her back. One of her cousins, who lived in New York, sent an eminent minister of the city to reconvert her. Harriet was no match for him in argument, but she clung to her position. Her grandfather at length came to her aid. He declared it oppressive and ungentlemanly to crowd the girl in that way; she had a right to her belief. The minister abruptly left.

About nine months after she became a Perfectionist Harriet first saw Noyes. Miss Clark wrote her to come immediately to West Westminster, for Noyes was going to preach in the village. Harriet went and heard him in a school-house. One who was present, looking back through the mists of sixty years, could still vividly recall his blue coat, his red hair, his face that "shone like an angel's." He took for his text the title page of the New Testament. He said that the word "testament" was the same as that elsewhere translated "covenant," and showed the difference be-

## A Resurrection Marriage

tween the old and the new covenants, reaching finally the conclusion that the new covenant secured salvation from sin.

After the meeting Noyes called at the house where Harriet was staying, his horse having been stabled there. They were introduced. The family urged him to remain over night. Harriet admired the directness of his reply. He only said he "would rather go home." Soon afterward on Harriet's invitation he preached at East Westminster, and was the guest of her grandfather. Still later she heard him preach in a school-house at Putney, and met him at his home, where she became acquainted with the other Putney Perfectionists.

NOYES TO HARRIET A. HOLTON

Putney, June 11, 1838.

*Beloved Sister:*

After a deliberation of more than a year in patient waiting and watching for indications of the Lord's will, I am now permitted, and indeed happily constrained by a combination of favorable circumstances to propose to you a partnership which I will not call marriage till I have defined it.

As believers we are already one with each other and with all saints. This primary and universal union is more radical and of course more important than any partial and external partnerships, and with reference to this it is said, "There is neither male nor female," "neither marrying nor giving in marriage" in heaven. With reference to this also my offensive remarks in the Battle-Axe Letter were written. Therefore we can enter into no engagements with each other which shall limit the range of our affections as they are limited in matrimonial engagements by the fashion of this world. I desire and expect my yoke-fellow will love all who love God, whether man or woman, with a warmth and strength of affection which is unknown to earthly lovers, and as freely as if she stood in no particular connection with me. In fact the object of my connection with her will be not to monopolize and enslave her heart or my own, but to enlarge and establish both in the free



## The Putney Community

fellowship of God's universal family. If the external union and companionship of a man and woman in accordance with these principles is properly called marriage, I know that marriage exists in heaven, and I have no scruple in offering you my heart and hand with an engagement to be married in due form as soon as God shall permit.

At first I designed to set before you many weighty reasons for this proposal, but upon second thought I prefer the attitude of a witness to that of an advocate, and shall therefore only suggest briefly a few matter-of-fact considerations, leaving the advocacy of the case to God, the customary persuasions and romance to your own imagination, and more particular explanations to a personal interview :

1. In the plain speech of a witness and not a flatterer I respect and love you for many desirable qualities, spiritual, intellectual, moral and personal, especially your faith, kindness, simplicity and modesty.

2. I am confident that the partnership I propose will greatly promote our mutual happiness and improvement.

3. It will also set us free, at least myself, from much reproach and many evil surmisings which are occasioned by celibacy in present circumstances.

4. It will enlarge our sphere and increase our means of usefulness to the people of God.

5. I am willing at this particular time to testify by example that I am a follower of Paul in holding that "marriage is honorable in all."

6. I am also willing to testify practically against that bondage of liberty which utterly sets at naught the ordinances of men and refuses to submit to them even for the Lord's sake. I know that the immortal union of hearts, the everlasting honeymoon which alone is worthy to be called marriage, can never be effected by a ceremony; and I know equally well that such

## A Resurrection Marriage

a marriage can never be marred by a ceremony. William Penn first bought Pennsylvania of the British king, then he paid the Indians for it. "Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."

7. I have the permission and good-will not only of God but of all who are especially concerned in my movements in making this proposal.

You are doubtless aware to some extent of my relations to Abigail Merwin. I will only say concerning her at present, that I have recently been released from any connection with her which would interfere with my proposal to you. My present relations to her are only such as exist between all believers by that primary bond, of which I wrote on the first page, and involve no external obligation. I still believe her to be a child of God and therefore love her. Yet I am as free as if I had never seen her.

You are also aware that I have no profession save that of a servant of God; a profession which has thus far subjected me to many vicissitudes and has given me but little of this world's prosperity. If you judge me by the outward appearance, or the future by the past, you will naturally find in the irregularity and seeming instability of my character and fortune many objections to a partnership. Of this I will only say, that I am conscious of possessing by the grace of God a spirit of firmness, perseverance, and faithfulness in every good work, which has made the vagabond, incoherent service, to which I have thus far been called, almost intolerable to me, and I shall welcome heaven's order for my release as an exile after a seven years' pilgrimage would welcome the sight of his home. I see now no reason why I should not have a "certain dwelling-place," and enter upon a course which is consistent with the duties of domestic life. Perhaps your reply to this will be a voice saying to me:

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"Watchman, let thy wanderings cease.  
Hie thee to thy quiet home."

Yours in the Lord,

J. H. NOYES.

HARRIET A. HOLTON TO NOYES

Westminster, June 12, 1838.

*Dear Brother:*

Two or three years ago some persons, commenting upon my refusal of an offer of marriage, said: "If she will not marry any one who is not of the same faith as herself, perhaps she may marry John Noyes." I repeated this to Fanny Lord, and added: "I should as soon think of marrying the morning star." Since that time I have looked at and admired this star, till it does not seem so far off; yet you will judge how unexpected was the subject of your letter.

I have passed through a course of teaching on the subject of marriage, and in word and deed have testified that I could not marry after the fashion of this world, and therefore thought I never should marry. But the circumstances in which I am placed make me certain it will be for my "happiness and improvement." . . . It is enough that you see wherein the arrangement may contribute to your "happiness and improvement," and that it may "increase our means of usefulness to the people of God." I trust in the Lord to make me an helpmeet for you.

This morning in thinking of myself as enlisting in the army of the Lord I said in my heart: "I will take any place assigned me. I'll be an errand-boy, a spy, or take care of the baggage." An aid to the general arose involuntarily, but I repressed that as being presumptuous.

In gladly accepting this proposal for an external union I agree with you that it will not "limit the range of our affec-

## A Resurrection Marriage

tions." The grace of God will exclude jealousy and everything with which the marriage state is defiled as we see it in the world. I only expect by it to be placed in a situation where I can enjoy what Harriet and Charlotte and your mother are now blessed with, your society and instruction as long as the Lord pleases and when he pleases.

You see there was no necessity for addressing me in the attitude of an advocate, for I was all ready through former teaching. As to my imagination you are aware from our last interview it is quite prolific. I trust to God, who has given me all things in Christ Jesus, to bring down every vain imagination.

Your not having a profession according to the fashion of this world is of no weight with me. But it may be of weight with my grandfather. His ideas of work and property are exactly the reverse of yours. But still I know "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He turneth it whithersoever He will." I have been astonished sometimes at the kindness my grandfather has manifested toward those who love the truth even concerning money, his idol. He let me have what I thought of sending to you a few weeks ago, saying he was willing to trust my judgment without inquiring what I thought of doing with it.

And there is my grandmother too. But these are subjects you did not mention, and I leave them for future consideration. I have written my feelings in answer to your proposal, looking only at my own heart and the teaching of God.

Wednesday.—This morning I felt like laying the subject of your letter before my grandfather myself. I told him I supposed your ideas of getting a living would not accord with his, and that I could not inform him whether you had any definite idea as to where your "certain dwelling-place" would be; but I wished to know if he had any objection to the person.



## The Putney Community

He said he did not wish to control me; he wished me to suit myself; he had hoped, if ever I married, I should continue in this house; also he had made a comfortable provision for me, and he hoped I would not put it out of my power to enjoy it. He thinks you are old enough to decide for yourself what you intend to do.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths."

Your sister,

H. A. HOLTON.

HARRIET A. HOLTON TO NOYES

Westminster, June 24, 1838.

*Dear John:*

You gave me an opportunity of opening my heart in regard to Abigail Merwin. I do not know much of her, only as one loved by you. In that position I might fear she would be the object of my envy. But I will tell you my feelings the morning I received your first letter, and as these came up from my heart I shall depend upon them whatever may arise to the contrary. I felt that the Lord had directed you to me, and that I was formed in heart to contribute to your happiness and usefulness in this act of your drama, as Abigail Merwin was in the beginning. I said, If my fate be that of the Empress Josephine, the Lord will give me a heart to rejoice and say Thy will be done. I am ready to distrust myself when I look forward, and I say, John, if I do betray you with a kiss, the Lord reward me accordingly. A traitor to such gentleness, goodness and truth would deserve the wrath of God.

Your affectionate daughter, sister, yours entirely in the Lord,

H. A. HOLTON.







THE JOHN H. NOYES HOUSE AT PUTNEY, VERMONT

## A Resurrection Marriage

NOYES TO HARRIET A. HOLTON

Putney, June 25, 1838.

*Dear Harriet:*

One or two things in your letter today seem to call for an immediate reply. Do you remember that Napoleon always said truly that his prosperity was identified with his marriage to Josephine? As soon as he parted with her he parted with fortune; and ere long it might well be said of him, "How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning!" If your fate is to be that of Josephine, mine is to be that of Napoleon. I have often thought of Napoleon's case as a terrible and warning illustration of Malachi 2: 15, 16: "Take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth; for the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away." Love in the beginning and treachery in the end is the way of the world in all things; a way which I hate as God hates.

Yours,

J. H. NOYES.<sup>1</sup>

On the coronation day of Victoria, Queen of England, June 28, 1838, the wedding foreshadowed in this correspondence took place at Chesterfield, New Hampshire. Noyes's brother-in-law, Squire Larkin G. Mead, performed the ceremony. Noyes took his bride immediately to his father's home at Putney, and in the following year they built a commodious house of their own.

As Miss Holton's timely gift had relieved Noyes's necessities at the suspension of *The Witness* the previous year, so now her income enabled him to establish an independent press. Within three weeks after their marriage they had bought a small second-hand printing-press. They knew nothing about printing, nor did any of the Putney Perfectionists. But Noyes's younger brother, George, a boy of fifteen, volunteered to learn the trade. A place was found for him in a printing-office at Keene, New Hampshire.

<sup>1</sup> The last six years of his life Noyes spent at Niagara Falls, Canada, with the beloved and loving wife of his youth, Harriet A. Holton.—G. W. N.

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After an apprenticeship of barely three weeks George returned to make a start and impart his knowledge to the rest. The press was set up in the loft of a saw-mill belonging to a Perfectionist named Cutler; the cases of type were squeezed in among the piles of lumber. As a preliminary job on which to perfect their skill it was decided to reprint in book form the twenty articles contributed by Noyes to *The New Haven Perfectionist*. Noyes, his wife, his sisters Harriet and Charlotte, and his brother George laboriously set the type; then with George's aid supplemented by much experimentation the form was made up. When all was ready, Noyes worked the old-fashioned hand-lever while his wife manipulated the ink-roller. Then came the binding. The work took four months. The result, an 18mo volume of 230 pages, was as rough as the garret in which it was produced, but it was legible. Their next undertaking was the resumption of *The Witness*, the publication of which had been suspended fourteen months before. In this they had marked success; each number showed improvement.

*The Witness*, which began August 20, 1837, was issued irregularly through two volumes of twenty-six numbers each, ending January 18, 1843. This was followed by *The Perfectionist* in three bi-weekly volumes extending from February 15, 1843, to February 14, 1846. The title of the paper was then changed to *The Spiritual Magazine*, which was published bi-weekly from March 15, 1846, to January 17, 1850, though there were long interruptions due to the transfer of the Community from Putney to Oneida. *The Free Church Circular* came next in two bi-weekly volumes covering 1850 and 1851; then *The Circular* in twelve volumes, published weekly in 1852, semi-weekly in 1853, tri-weekly in 1854, and weekly again from 1855 to 1863; then *The Circular*, new series, published weekly from 1864 to 1875; finally *The American Socialist*, a weekly, which covered the period from 1876 to 1879 and came to an end when the Community itself was in the throes of dissolution.

## Chapter 3

### BELIEF IN NOYES'S DIVINE COMMISSION

THE winter previous to his marriage Noyes spent, as we have seen, at Kingston in the home of Abram C. Smith. "Through the greater part of the winter," he writes, "Smith and I were much occupied in arguments and semi-contentions about my claim of leadership. I plainly and repeatedly told him that I would never go on board any ship again unless I could have the helm, meaning that I would never connect myself with any individual or association in religion unless I was acknowledged leader. Smith at last appeared fully determined not to submit his judgment to mine, and I then prepared to leave him. Just as I was about to depart his mind was changed by the power of God, and I concluded to remain with him."

#### STATEMENT BY NOYES

Kingston, February 4, 1838.

Whereas Abram C. Smith has at sundry times and in divers manners testified his submission to the will and judgment of God in me; and whereas he has this day given me satisfactory evidence that said submission is sincere and practical, first by publicly engaging with me and at my suggestion in an act of daring rebellion against the fashion of this world and the authority of the prevailing religion; second by submitting without resistance to my reproof; therefore, be it known to all who shall read this writing, that I hereby promise by the permission of God to hold my salvation and Christian character in common with him, acknowledging him as my brother in the Lord before all men, and standing in a readiness



## The Putney Community

to share his fate henceforth in all conflicts with the powers of death and damnation.

J. H. NOYES.

MRS. POLLY NOYES TO HARRIET A. HOLTON

Putney, February 25, 1838.

*Dear Miss Holton:*

I do not feel very free to communicate, for I see that we do not think just alike of the late movements in this "new dispensation." . . .

I have expressed my views to Mr. Smith,<sup>1</sup> and have written the same to John. We had a letter from John on Wednesday, the contents of which were not in the least calculated to alter my opinions, but rather to confirm me in the idea that some of these movements belong to a later development of the gospel state. . . .

What Mr. Smith said of colonizing, church organization, money matters, reprobation, separation and, as I understood him, of the Bible not being at present a standard of action, I cannot now receive. I could not but apply the same thing to himself which he had said of many Perfectionists, that they see things ahead and feel and act as if they were already in possession.

My testimony to Mr. Smith just before he left was such that he declared: "Were it not for the last word John said to me when I came away, 'Do not cast off my mother,' I should feel obliged to do it." I need not tell you it was a trial to me and the girls, who were wholly with Mr. Smith, thus to part; but I will not conceal anything from you nor any one else who has a right to know, though I lose the confidence of the whole fraternity.

With affection,

POLLY NOYES.

<sup>1</sup> Smith had been sent by Noyes on a mission to his "flock in Vermont."  
—G. W. N.

## Belief in Noyes's Divine Commission

NOYES TO HIS MOTHER

Kingston, February 25, 1838.

*Beloved:*

In the days of "auld lang syne," when I went astray on Checkerberry Hill or paddled in the brooks of Dummerston, you would often say: "My child, why don't you remember and mind? You would save yourself a great deal of trouble. You are a little boy and must mind your mother." So I grew up till I was too old to hearken to you. Then God took me in hand and gave me the same training over again; and now he has set me to reward you for your care over me by changing places with you and dealing with you as my little daughter. So when you write me such letters as I received the other day, you must expect I shall affectionately reprove you for thinking that you know more than your father. My child, be still. You know but little, and it becomes you to be modest.

I have no disposition to reason much with you about the things of which you write, because I know that you err not for lack of brain-work but rather for superfluity of it. Perhaps Brother Smith has told you that he dissented most stoutly from my judgment as long as we reasoned together, which was for many months, and that he was cured in half an hour after he honestly inquired of the Lord. Perhaps you remember too how many times after much contention you have found me right and yourself wrong. Now I insist that you learn by experience and not continually fall into the same error. The things you "seem to see" are nothing but trash, broken bank bills that will never pass with me. The true bills of God's signature begin with "I know," and in due time commend themselves to every conscience. The currency is indeed still in a disordered state, so that there is some excuse for offering and receiving bad bills. But I am making strenuous efforts to clear my busi-

## The Putney Community

ness of them, and as I have on hand a considerable amount of specie (that is, certainties) I am sure of speedy success. I hope you will help your father in these efforts, like a dutiful daughter, and not go about to hinder and vex him. I am placed not by myself but by our Maker in a highly responsible and perplexing situation. My family is large and much in need of good examples and good discipline. I am weak in everything but faith and hope. Now I pray you call to mind the days of your motherhood, and let your own trials teach you compassion for mine.

As to what you say about "the time" I will only say that I differ from you for reasons which I cannot now stop to open to you. Children often hear such observations as this from their parents. As to the matter of women's preaching you will find in I Tim. 2: 12-14 that Paul regarded Eve's leading the way in sin as the very reason against instead of for her teaching. However I have no objection, as I believe Paul had none, to your preaching as often as you are moved by the Holy Ghost. Only make full proof of your ministry by obedience, subjection, meekness, endurance, love and good works. Then you shall teach and rule over me, if God pleases. As to signs and wonders be sure of this, that God will do no more in that way until the people take suitable notice of what he has done already. . . .

Harriet may send me, if she pleases, some of her spare music books, as I am somewhat given to fiddling.

Yours,

J. H. NOYES.

Mrs. Abram C. Smith during this winter at Kingston was active and sometimes violent in her opposition. After Smith's submission Noyes assumed control of their household. Mrs. Smith appealed to the neighbors. Finally, while Smith was absent in Vermont, the situation became so threatening that Noyes withdrew. A few days later Smith returned to his home.

## Belief in Noyes's Divine Commission

ABRAM C. SMITH TO MRS. POLLY NOYES

Kingston, April 6, 1838.

*Beloved Sister:*

Last week, while I was in New York, John left here for Ithaca. When I returned I knew not where he was gone, until today I received a letter from him, stating that his purpose was to print another paper. . . .

Since my return from Putney I have been sorely tried, and the matter of trial is not fully decided with me yet. I am determined to move sure, if I move slow. I believe John is right in the perception of truth, but the time when, and the means how, I see he is not certain. The fact that he was before the time here in driving the battle compelled him to leave in a retreat before his enemy. . . .

I do not take back any of my confession of John. I believe him to be the father in this dispensation, as Paul was in that of his day. Although we allow him to be the head under Jesus, yet we have the promise of being taught of God, so that we believe and act from divine persuasion as well as he does.

Yours truly in Christ Jesus,

ABRAM C. SMITH.

DAVID HARRISON TO HARRIET A. HOLTON

Meriden, Connecticut, April 18, 1838.

*Dear Sister:* . . .

All or nearly all abiding truth that has come to light has come through him [Noyes]. How any that have fully known and proved him can reject him without doing violence to themselves, I know not. . . . My testimony is now and has been for a number of months, that Brother Noyes bears the same relation to the church of God at the present day that Moses did to the Israelites and that Paul did to the church of Christ



## The Putney Community

in his day, namely, that God has made him a Prince and a Leader. "By knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." This passage is probably a prophetic description of the character of Christ in a special manner, but to me it is also descriptive of Brother Noyes's character, and that too without robbing the meek and lowly Jesus of his crown.

DAVID HARRISON.

### MRS. POLLY NOYES'S RECOLLECTIONS

Soon after his marriage John found it necessary to come out with the declaration, that all who expected to attach themselves to him must take a subordinate place and have confidence in him as qualified by the special grace of God to take control both temporal and spiritual. His wife, his sisters Harriet and Charlotte and his brother George were prepared heartily to comply with this condition, and others in the circle of believers more or less as they understood his requirements. I alone withstood. How could I, who had so long been the acknowledged head of the family, consent to give up the control with which I believed God had invested me? How could I see my judgment overruled in all the family arrangements,—who should come into the family and who not, whether or not George should go to college, even in the preparations for the table? In every respect whatever looked to the applause of men was immediately to be abandoned. I was treated with decent civility, but with a cold reserve that made my home anything but pleasant.

The summer passed away and my troubles increased. The last of August I made arrangements to leave home for a while. My feelings were such that I could not think of going among my relatives, so with my husband's consent I took fifty dollars and went to Springfield, Massachusetts, and took boarding. When I returned after seven weeks there was no abatement of



## Belief in Noyes's Divine Commission

opposing feelings. Mrs. Freeman, a believer from Newark, was now a member of the family much in favor, and partook of the general spirit toward me. When I remonstrated with my daughter Harriet, she expressed with much severity her determination to abide with John rather than with me. Then, if ever, I felt the iron enter my soul. I left home again, and went to my brother's for two weeks; then returned somewhat strengthened in heart, but home was still a furnace of fire to me.

About this time I had some correspondence with members of the church, but was not suffered to go further than to receive some friendly tokens of their regard for me.

MRS. POLLY NOYES TO A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

Putney, December 1, 1838.

*Dear ——:*

I feel called upon to give you my views of the subject of controversy, that is, whether John has any power in himself or has received any from God over other Christians. Is any such person as he claims to be, and such as many testify that they believe he is, anywhere spoken of in Scripture? If so, I wish you to show it me, and especially that John is that person.

I will mention here the different characters which have been applied to him by different persons:

His wife thinks he is a prophet, and when I asked her what evidence she had of this, she said: "What do you think of the stone cut out of the mountain without hands?" She applies this text to him: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged," and all others of that description scattered through the prophecies.

Mrs. Freeman speaks of him as another David; thinks he has the discernment of spirits; and when I ask her why she cannot oppose him, she says he seems more like God than any other person she ever saw.

## The Putney Community

Smith thinks he is the same as Paul in his dispensation, a leader, infallible in spiritual things but liable to err in judgment.

Harrison calls him a Leader and Commander to the people.

Harriet and Charlotte say that he is Christ's representative upon earth, the savior mentioned by Obadiah; that he is infallible in spirit but not in the letter.

S—— C—— says he is a leader sent from God, and she dare not oppose him.

M—— C—— says he is a righteous man.

I remember saying to Tirzah that I believed he was to us the "arms of the Lord" so often spoken of in Scripture, to which she assented.

Some will say that the Savior sustained all these characters in the Jewish dispensation, and that John is to do the same in this new dispensation.

It appears to me that this is the truth: When John came into the faith he found in himself new views of Scripture, new strength in the Lord, and with his lively imagination imbibed the idea that he was something more than ordinary in his calling. But is it not true that all who have known this faith receive the same advanced life in their religious character, the only difference being in their natural temperament and education? Is there anything more in him than in other great reformers, such as Luther, Calvin and Erasmus?

As he believed so he asserted, and we received, cherished and continued to uphold the error until it has become an unquestionable fact in the minds of many. But is not this the way in which all spiritual tyranny has established itself in the world?

It is now more than a year since I have seen that there was an error somewhere; and I have been gaining in strength so that now I must testify that John and all who are associated

## Belief in Noyes's Divine Commission

with him in this thing are out of the way, and their eyes must and will be opened to see it.

P. NOYES.

Noyes's mother stood her ground in opposition to his claim of divine authority until March 1839, when she capitulated in *The Witness* as follows: "Though I have never doubted my first confession of salvation from sin, yet during the past year I have expressed to different members of the church an expectation that I might again return to them. I am now delivered from the doubt and darkness that then oppressed me, and am determined to follow what I know to be the truth, let what will be the consequence. It is true I have been led through fire and flood, especially the last year. But the suffering and separation which I have endured were the only way in which I could prove to myself that I am not governed by parental partiality and self-exaltation in the testimony which I now give to John H. Noyes as being to me a teacher and father in spiritual things."

The dogma of Noyes's divine commission became a touchstone in the Putney and Oneida Communities. Those who rejected it were turned away; those who accepted it were bound together in a brotherhood of self-sacrificing quest for the Kingdom of God. /

## Chapter 4<sup>1</sup>

### CONVERSION OF THE CRAGINS

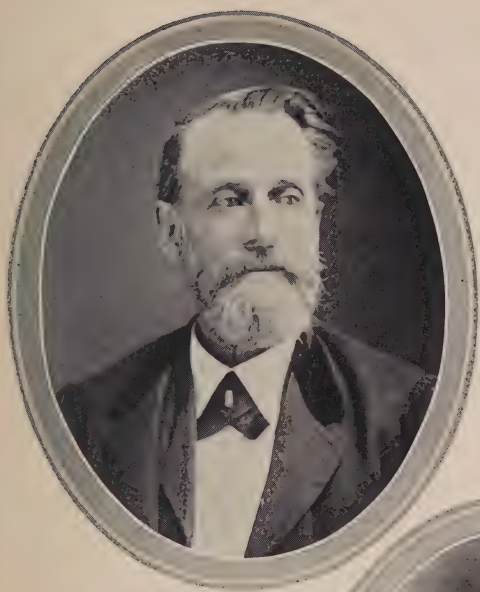
**G**EORGE CRAGIN was born at Douglas, Massachusetts, in 1808. His father was a merchant and cotton manufacturer, and represented the town of Douglas in the State Legislature for thirty-five years. George worked on the farm and in his father's factory from the time he was ten years old and had little schooling. Too much politics in conjunction with the financial panic of 1827 forced his father into bankruptcy, and George hired out as a clerk in New York City. Charles G. Finney was then conducting a revival in the city, and George with thousands of others was converted. This was in June 1829. George, by nature a zealous propagandist, immediately threw himself into revival work.

One Sunday in June 1831, when returning to his boarding-house, George's attention was arrested by a girl, beautiful and appealing. She was Mary E. Johnson, a member of his church. She held by the hand a waif, who had been brought to the church-school in the morning and at the end of the day was uncalled for. She had tried to find the child's home, and turned to George for help. Leading the child between them they found the mother. Mary then invited him to tea at her home, which was near, and introduced him to her parents.

Mary was born at Portland, Maine, in 1812. Her father was Daniel Johnson, a bookseller and legal expert. Her mother was Mary Gorham, a deeply religious woman, whose pastor was Edward Payson, the mystic. The Johnsons later moved to New York City. Mary was carefully educated in private schools until the age of fifteen. She then became an assistant teacher, and at eighteen, having shown unusual gifts, was placed in charge of an infant-school in the church.

It was love at first sight with both. After a courtship of two and a half years they were married.

<sup>1</sup> The materials for Chapters IV and V are drawn from G. Cragin's *Story of a Life*.—G. W. N.



GEORGE CRAGIN



MARY E. (JOHNSON) CRAGIN





## Conversion of the Cragins

In the latter part of 1834 Cragin with two friends organized an independent firm, which after a few months was dissolved by mutual consent. Cragin then became business manager of *The Advocate of Moral Reform*, a paper published by The Female Moral Reform Society of New York City. Under his management the subscription list of *The Advocate* increased to twenty thousand names, and many new branches of the Society were established.

The Cragins' first acquaintance with Perfectionism was in the summer of 1835, when Miss Fowler, a Perfectionist from New Haven, visited them. On departing she left a copy of Noyes's tract on *Faith*, which they eagerly read. Two years later Mrs. William Green, head of the Moral Reform Society, and her husband, an intimate associate of Finney, became Perfectionists. This put the Moral Reform Society in an uproar. Mrs. Green was expelled, and her successor wrote the attack on Perfectionism in *The Advocate*, which has been quoted.<sup>1</sup> Cragin, though much influenced by Mrs. Green, sided with the Society and suppressed Noyes's reply to the attack after reading it with his wife.

Toward the end of 1838 Mrs. Black, a Perfectionist friend of Mrs. Green's, spent several weeks in the Cragin home. President Mahan of Oberlin College, who with Finney had embraced Perfectionism of the Wesleyan type, occasionally called at the Cragin home and disputed with Mrs. Black. Cragin was much impressed by his views, but Mrs. Cragin was more attracted by the doctrines of Noyes. Through Mrs. Black the Cragins now obtained more of Noyes's writings, and made the acquaintance of the group of Perfectionists, about twenty-five in number, living in the vicinity of Newark, New Jersey. In October 1839 they met for the first time Abram C. Smith. Formerly of Newark, he now lived at Rondout, near Kingston, seventy-five miles up the Hudson River. His business however brought him often to New York.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO NOYES

New York, November 22, 1839.

Dear Brother:

It is now nearly four weeks since I was translated from the "kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." To him be all the glory, who has taken me out of the "pit of miry clay," and set my feet upon the rock Christ Jesus never

<sup>1</sup> Page 6.

## The Putney Community

to be moved. Long I struggled, hard I worked, and much I prayed, until I saw that unbelief was the obstacle that prevented me from receiving full salvation from sin. Here I supposed I must wait for him to reveal himself to me, so that I could believe. Your essay on *Faith* was put into my hands, and I clearly saw while reading it that I must confess Christ without feeling. This was a new and startling idea, but the Lord showed me that this was faith, that this was really and truly venturing upon him. I immediately began to testify to the fact that Christ was in me a savior from all sin, and soon found joy and peace in believing. I need not tell you that my "peace is as a river." "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

But I have not told you all. No! Words cannot express the half. While I am writing to you I am weeping for joy. My dear husband one week since entered the kingdom. When I tell you that he has been the publishing agent of *The Advocate of Moral Reform*, and had been born but three days when they cast him out, you will rejoice with me. Ah, brother Noyes, how have "the mighty fallen!" In him you will find a most rigidly upright character, Grahamism<sup>1</sup> and Oberlin perfection all in ruins. How he clung to Oberlin as with a death-grasp! How confident he was that none were saved from sin but mere Grahamites! How disgusted with the conduct of Perfectionists! The Lord has pulled down strong towers. Bless the Lord. On the first of December he will be without money and without business. How this rejoices me! We shall stand still and see the Lord provide.

Will you please to write us, and give our love to all in the faith with whom you meet? We shall be very glad to see you, when you come to the city.

In peace and love, yours,

MARY E. CRAGIN.

<sup>1</sup> Advocates of unbolted "Graham" bread.—G. W. N.

## Chapter 5

### DELUSION AT WORK

SEVERAL causes contributed to make the Newark group of Perfectionists more prominent than any other outside of Putney. Perfectionism had been established among them early by means of the original paper which Noyes and Boyle published at New Haven in 1834-5. Noyes had become personally acquainted with Abram C. Smith, their leader, as far back as September 1835, and had formed a hearty union with him. Newark was the place from which Noyes issued his renunciation letter to Charles H. Weld<sup>1</sup> and his declaration of "everlasting separation" from James Boyle<sup>2</sup>—two vital steps in the development of Putney Perfectionism. Thus Newark had more claim to be of pure Noyesite origin and tradition than places where Perfectionism had been planted by others.

In process of time the Newark group split into three parties corresponding to the primary types of religious experience.<sup>3</sup> A legalistic party included the pastor and elders of the Free Church. An antinomian party was headed by Charles H. Weld. A middle party, led by Abram C. Smith, acknowledged Noyes as a divinely appointed apostle, and was attempting to steer clear of both legality and antinomianism. Out of this situation arose a scandal, the first and only one, Noyes declared, within the circle of his immediate superintendence and responsibility.

When the Cragins were first introduced to the Newark Perfectionists the antinomian party were in the ascendant. There were no leaders, no rules, no regular meetings. Opposition to the churches rather than the pursuit of holiness was the chief concern. When Cragin suggested that more copies of *The Witness* be sent for, he was told that it was unnecessary since all were "taught of God." Dreams, impressions and impulses were thought to be the voice of God, and social relations were governed by them. Whenever Per-

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 292-298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 298-300.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

## The Putney Community

fectionists met, it was expected that they would kiss. Some went so far as to bundle, and one couple lived as man and wife nearly a year before they were married. Heart-burnings and jealousies resulted. A climax of wantonness was reached in December 1839, when the funeral of a member was held at the country estate of Mr. and Mrs. Green. There was much singing of "Babylon is Fallen," much unedifying talk and loose behavior while the company was snow-bound for two days at the hospitable mansion. "I was unable at the time," wrote Cragin, "to interpret rightly that Perfectionist convention. One thing is certain—we were sheep without a shepherd, and were surrounded by beasts of prey."

After this Green experienced a reaction toward legality. He swung clear over to Shakerism. A theory of spiritual wifehood that limited one man to one woman began to be heard, and there were whisperings of a new doctrine called "striving for the mastery." In the spring of 1840 Smith had a clash with Green, and brought back some to the liberty views, among them Mrs. Cragin. She wrote to Noyes of the "glorious fires" in Smith's family since she emerged from the cloud of Shakerism. All this time Smith was looked upon as Noyes's representative, standing against the legality of the churches on one side and the antinomianism of Charles H. Weld on the other. Smith had been one of the first to acknowledge Noyes's claim to leadership, and Noyes had expressed what seemed in the light of later events extravagant confidence in him. Even as late as April 1840 Noyes wrote to Harrison that Smith in a recent visit to Putney was found "faithful and true" and "growing like the calves of the stall."

Charles H. Weld had been instrumental some years before in bringing about the marriage of Smith and his wife, Mary Ann. The marriage was desperately unhappy. Noyes called Mary Ann a "perfect devil." Her opposition to his measures against legality in the spring of 1838 compelled him to retreat to Ithaca. At last in April 1840 Mary Ann "freely confessed" to Smith that he and Noyes had acted the part of righteousness two years before, gave up all claims upon Smith as her husband, and declared herself forever saved from sin.

As the expiration of their lease approached in the spring of 1840 the Cragins were faced by the question, where had the Lord prepared a place for them. They had received from Smith a standing invitation to join his family at Rondout, if they could do no better. Mrs. Cragin had misgivings, but move they must, and there seemed to be no other opening. On the 7th of March therefore they took passage on a steamer bound for Rondout.



## Delusion at Work

Smith's family consisted of himself, his wife and four children. His dwelling, a solitary stone edifice erected before the Revolution, stood on the south side of Rondout Creek, directly opposite the village of Rondout. It was furnished with monastic plainness, and economy in food and clothing was carried almost to the point of parsimony. Smith had a position as agent and overseer with a lime manufacturing company, and placed Cragin in charge of the farm. Cragin soon became much absorbed in his new vocation.

So far as the outdoor business was concerned things appeared to run smoothly, but within doors there was trouble. Between Mr. and Mrs. Smith no harmony existed. Presently Cragin began to notice coolness on the part of Smith toward himself. They rarely now had any communication except in planning the work. On the other hand Smith's communications with Mrs. Cragin were more and more frequent and private. "Did I discover," wrote Cragin, "a corresponding coolness on the part of Mrs. Cragin, or was it a distorted imagination? She had little to say to me except in criticism of a spirit in me which claimed her affections." That was Cragin's weak point. Freely and sincerely would he admit that in forsaking all for Christ his wife was included. But his feelings, like willful disobedient children, would listen to no such reasoning. Between an accusing conscience and an idolatrous love for his wife it seemed as though the more he struggled the deeper he sank into despair.

About the first of May Smith compelled his wife to leave the house and take refuge over the creek among her relatives. Immediately afterward his relation with Mrs. Cragin assumed an illicit character. But he so played his cards as to throw the responsibility of this intimacy upon Cragin. He told Mrs. Cragin one evening to feign distress of mind in the night and ask permission to repair to his chamber for spiritual relief. By this time completely under his power she did as he bade. The following night the visit was repeated. "My God!" said Cragin to himself. "Where is this thing to end? Are these operations necessary to cure me of the marriage spirit?" Most earnestly he prayed for a change of doctors, or at least a council of experts.

His prayer was answered. Within three days J. H. Noyes, D. Harrison and J. L. Skinner<sup>1</sup> appeared. They had gone to New York to attend the annual meetings of the clergy, but on their arrival in the city Noyes said to his friends: "I am afraid there is mischief at work in Smith's family." They went to Rondout without

<sup>1</sup> John L. Skinner, a lifelong coadjutor of Noyes, was at this time living in Noyes's family and helping on *The Witness*.—G. W. N.

## The Putney Community

delay, and their coming was truly opportune. A warrant had that day been issued against Smith for a breach of the peace, and the Rondout roughs, aroused by Mrs. Smith's story, were planning an attack. Smith counseled war; Noyes peace with the outside world, criticism and sincerity within. He rebuked Smith sharply for his course with his wife. He then drew out the facts about Smith and Mrs. Cragin, and admonished them faithfully but in love. Cragin joined in denouncing legality, and freely forgave Smith and Mrs. Cragin, considering himself quite as much in the wrong as they.

The next day Noyes, Smith and Cragin marched up to the Judge's office and settled, Smith giving bonds to keep the peace and support his wife. In the evening Noyes left for home, taking Smith and his eldest daughter with him. As the mob regarded Smith the chief offender, his absence pacified them.

At the end of two weeks Smith returned. Noyes while at Rondout had advised that there be no further intimacy between Smith and Mrs. Cragin. Believing that this advice would be faithfully followed Cragin looked for more fellowship than ever between the three. He was disappointed. Within a few days Smith commenced another game of hypocrisy. He was well aware that Mrs. Cragin's confidence in Noyes had been greatly strengthened by his visit. To accomplish his end therefore he must make it appear that he had the confidence of Noyes to the fullest extent. He began by hinting that Noyes virtually approved of their past proceedings, his public criticism of them having been chiefly for Cragin's benefit. He also gave her to understand that while he was at Putney he had many long private talks with Noyes on social matters, and that they were in full accord.

While thus engaged in winning back his power over Cragin's wife, he kept Cragin helpless by loading him down with hard work, self-condemnation and evil-thinking. This pressure stirred up all Cragin's earnestness to win the justification and peace of Christ. That victory came at last. Laboring alone in the field he had a new view of God's infinite goodness and mercy. He was truly thankful for all his chastening, and evil-thinking was taken away. He saw little of Smith, whose intimacy with Mrs. Cragin was cautiously concealed.

In the latter part of July in response to a request from Greencastle, Pennsylvania, Noyes commissioned Smith to visit the Perfectionists in that section for the purpose of communicating to them more fully the gospel of salvation from sin. John B. Lyvere and several others, who had been spending a few days at Rondout, were about to return to New York, and Smith proposed to accom-

## Delusion at Work

pany them on his way to Pennsylvania. At the same time he managed by strategy to obtain from Cragin a proposal that Mrs. Cragin join the party. When nearly a week had passed, Cragin received a few lines from his wife saying that she intended to leave for home the next evening and would be happy to meet him on the arrival of the boat at Rondout. Her letter affected him strangely. It melted at once the icy feelings toward her that had imperceptibly accumulated in his heart. As he entered the ladies' cabin she met him with a subdued yet affectionate and sincere greeting. He soon discovered that there was a heavy burden upon her soul, but he had so thoroughly disciplined himself that he did not ask for explanations. He learned incidentally however, much to his surprise, that Smith instead of going directly to the field of his mission had tarried a week in the city.

A week or two later Cragin had occasion to go to New York himself, and called upon Mr. and Mrs. Lyvere. From them he learned that Smith and Mrs. Cragin had broken the solemn promise which they had made to Noyes in the spring. Lyvere thought the case should be reported at once to Noyes, and offered to carry the message in person. Cragin gave him money for the trip and, admonishing him to report nothing but the truth, was soon on the boat for Rondout.

That night on the Hudson was one long to be remembered. The steamer was heavily laden and contended against wind and tide. "A fitting type," thought Cragin, "of my own situation." "Turn back," whispered the Tempter. "All is treachery, desolation and darkness. Do you still believe in the sustaining power of God?" "Yes," replied Cragin aloud. "My faith in God and in Mr. Noyes is unshaken."

The morning sun shone beneficently upon the calm waters of the bay as Cragin entered a skiff to row himself to the opposite shore. His wife was at the pier. But as he approached, the playful smile upon her face suddenly vanished. "George," she said, "You know all. The secret is out, and I thank God for revealing it. I will make a clean breast now, for I can carry the works of darkness no longer." She then related the simple facts without attempting to screen herself from judgment.

The return of Smith from his mission to Pennsylvania was looked for daily. In view of this Mrs. Cragin said to her husband: "George, you can hardly conceive of the terrible dread I have of meeting that man." "You must put your trust in God," Cragin replied. He took this exhortation to himself also, for he keenly felt his inability to cope unaided with a spirit so strong as Smith's.

## The Putney Community

Late the next Saturday night loud raps on the door were heard, followed by the well-known voice of Smith. As Cragin left his bed to obey the summons Mrs. Cragin begged him not to allow Smith to enter their room. At the door Smith extended his hand.

"No, I cannot take the hand of one who has so cruelly wronged me."

"Where is Mary? I want to see her."

"You cannot. She absolutely declines to see you. She has revealed all."

The next morning the three met alone in the sitting-room. Smith stood resolutely on the ground that he had pleased God in all that he had done, and regarded Cragin with contempt for presuming to sit in judgment. But Cragin held firmly to the judgment he had given, that Smith had been and still was under the delusion of the Devil.

All day the battle raged with unabated fierceness. Finally in the evening, seeing that he was losing rather than gaining ground, Smith suddenly declared that he would start immediately for Putney. "Very well," Cragin replied. "I will submit to Mr. Noyes's judgment." Smith now became affectionate toward Cragin. Soon he asked Cragin if he would write a line to Noyes, saying that he cherished no unkind personal feelings. Cragin complied. Smith then invited Cragin to row him across the creek. On leaving the boat he asked Cragin to give him a kiss. Not until Cragin returned to the house did he divine Smith's motive.

After inquiring earnestly of God Cragin said to his wife: "My mind is made up to leave this place at once. We will go first to New York." Mrs. Cragin was overjoyed. They sold most of their furniture for cash. Cragin settled up all business for which he was responsible, had their few remaining goods taken over the creek, and on the second day of September 1840 the family embarked for New York. As an hour would elapse before the steamer left, Cragin went to the post-office hoping to find a letter from Noyes. To his great joy the letter had just arrived.

Putney, August 29, 1840.

*Dear Brother Cragin:*

Mr. Lyvere arrived here today, and has communicated to me facts which compel me to believe that Smith and Mrs. Cragin have violated the solemn engagement which they made when I was at Rondout. They are now adulterers. Before they



## Delusion at Work

might have said and thought sincerely that they did no wrong, because they acted with your consent and not in contravention of any engagement or any law except that of this world, which is of no authority before God. But now they have acted without your consent and in gross violation of their voluntary and solemn promise, and therefore in violation of God's eternal law of truth.

What is my duty in the case? Though friendship is disposed to blind the eye of righteousness, I cannot avoid the conviction that it is my duty to withdraw myself from all fellowship with these persons. God has declared that adulterers shall not inherit his kingdom. His apostle has commanded believers to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." I see that no real fellowship can exist between me and Smith. He is governed by passions and influences which God has long taught me to bring into stern subjection to reason and to his will. Confidence is the basis of love. And what confidence can I have in a man who, after all he has seen and known of my sentiments, after all he has confessed and professed, after his unqualified covenant at Rondout to do nothing important in these matters without my consent, returns directly to works of evil concupiscence? His captivity to lust would be enough to forbid confidence, but this is not the worst of his case. That captivity has made him a deceiver. He has gone to Pennsylvania under commission from me at the very time when he has disqualified himself for that commission by a gross breach of faith toward me and toward the gospel which I preach. I see not how I can avoid the necessity of publicly retracting the confidence I have expressed in him, and giving my reasons. At all events I shall make no secret of his doings, for I will not be a keeper of shameful secrets for any man. I shall in some way make it manifest that I no longer regard Abram C. Smith as a Perfectionist.



## The Putney Community

If you ask what is your duty, I answer, Cut off that offending right hand and follow me. Let not friendship paralyze your honesty and faithfulness to Christ. You are no longer bound to keep the secrets or defend the character of Mrs. Cragin or Smith. Let them eat the fruit of their own doings. Clear yourself of the wreck, if you have to jump into the ocean. This seems cruel advice, but after deliberating most calmly, not in wrath or malice but in all tenderness toward them as well as you and in the fear of God, I can give no other in faith, in conscience or in friendship.

I do not recommend to you to take any hasty or violent external measures, but purge your spirit of all fellowship with the offenders; and then, waiting on the Lord in soberness and wisdom, take such course as he by his spirit and providence shall point out.

I would not wish to make the charges contained in this letter more public than they are already without the testimony of more than one witness. I therefore suggest to you the propriety of speaking to Smith on the subject, and getting, if possible, his own confession before you show him this letter.

Write me all that is in your heart.

Yours in faithfulness,

J. H. NOYES.

Immediately on reaching New York Cragin wrote to Noyes that his heart was too full for utterance on paper, and that as soon as circumstances would permit he should visit him. After reading the letter Mrs. Cragin penned the following postscript: "Since the fatal charm has been dissolved, I see how I have been deceived and taught to believe that I was in an inner circle where it was right and pleasing to God to do what I did. I never in my heart turned aside from the promise I made to you last spring. Again and again I asked Mr. Smith if you would be pleased, for I had terrible misgivings. He assured me that you would, and that he himself would tell you. Guilty as I am, I have been miserably deluded by him. I am reaping the curse of trusting in man, and I

## Delusion at Work

deserve it. The instruction I received to lie and deceive began to open my eyes. I do thank God for the judgment that has overtaken me, even if I am to be sent to hell at last, and I wish none to consider me a friend of the gospel until my deeds make it fully manifest."

Cragin's face was now set toward Putney. Within two weeks he found himself there inquiring for the residence of J. H. Noyes. A few moments' walk brought him into Noyes's presence. The meeting was sympathetic but quiet. Cragin somehow had little to say. Egotism had left him. His trials were nothing. His thoughts did not appear to be his own, but were the thoughts of those about him. The little circle of believers seemed different from any he had met before. All were so kind, so quiet, so thoughtful and studious, yet in spirit so free. Short were the days during the week he spent at Putney. Little did he remember what he said or did until the morning of his departure. Noyes and he were on the portico, each busy with unexpressed thoughts, when Noyes broke the silence:

"What are you going to do after you return to your family?"

"Find a situation in some counting-room or manufacturing establishment."

"I have a proposal to make to you. Come and spend the winter with me, studying the Bible and waiting on the will of God."

"No business in the world would suit me better; but my circumstances would hardly justify me in accepting your kind offer."

"What are those unfavorable circumstances?"

"The support of my family."

"You will bring your family with you of course. My house is large enough for us all."

Could he believe his ears? Was Noyes really in earnest? Noyes divined Cragin's doubts, and immediately replied that he used words not to conceal but to express his thoughts.

"Enough," said Cragin. "I accept the offer as freely as you have made it."

On reaching home Cragin told his wife the result of his visit to Putney. She exclaimed: "Oh, that I were worthy of this favor!" "Christ is worthy," Cragin answered, "and he is your life still, is he not?" Ten days later Mr. and Mrs. Cragin with their two children arrived at Putney, and were escorted by Noyes to his home.

## Chapter 6

### BEGINNINGS OF ORGANIZATION AT PUTNEY

THE Smith-Cragin affair convinced Noyes that his Eden no less than the original one must have a wall and a "flaming sword that turned every way" to keep the Devil out. The first of these protections he found in organization; the second in mutual criticism, which will be described in a later chapter.

Early in 1840 the Putney Perfectionists began holding meetings on Sunday in Noyes's own house, which was now finished. By the end of 1840 meetings were also held Wednesday evenings at the East Part and Thursday evenings at the Noyes homestead. In 1841 a chapel was built, in which after August 1st daily sessions were held.

#### THE SOCIETY OF INQUIRY

#### NOYES IN *The Witness* FEBRUARY 22, 1841

During the past year a small company of believers have met regularly at my house for discussion and exhortation. The interest of the meetings and the number attending have been gradually increasing. We have been from the beginning generally agreed in our views of the lawfulness of organization, and we have waited on the Lord for the signs of his mind concerning its expediency. On Sunday January 31st I presented to the meeting the following reasons for believing it expedient now to institute an organization:

First.—It is desirable that we should assume a form adapted to conjoint and democratic action.

Second.—In our unorganized state our enemies have an excuse for that affected contempt which is their favorite weapon

## Beginnings of Organization at Putney

against us. They have also an opportunity of heaping on us the odium of the disorders which have appeared under the name of Perfectionism. By instituting an organization we shall assume our just responsibilities and liberate ourselves from those that are unjust.

Third.—We have lived in the testimony of holiness without organization long enough to give us assurance that organization cannot enslave our religion.

Fourth.—As followers of the Primitive Church we ought to look confidently for the same grace and wisdom that directed them into an organization and saved them from its dangers.

Fifth.—The history of Perfectionism has proved that disunion breeds disorder. We are evidently called to try whether union will not breed things pure, lovely and of good report.

Sixth.—Perfectionists of the Boyle School are committed against organization; Oberlin Perfectionists cleave to the organization of the churches. We only can step forth as the independent organized representatives of Perfectionism.

After considerable discussion we agreed that it was now expedient to form an organization, and I was appointed to draft a constitution. It seemed to me that our creed and discipline ought to be developed progressively by the joint counsels of all who were to adopt them instead of being formulated at the outset by a committee or an individual. I sought therefore to devise a constitution simply sufficient to make known our primary distinctive principles and bind us together in a form adapted to social action.

### CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIETY OF INQUIRY OF PUTNEY, VERMONT

We, whose names are hereunto affixed, believe that the Bible is the word of God, and that we ought therefore to search it with diligence and respect. We also believe that the chief object



## The Putney Community

of the Bible is to make known to mankind a way of present and eternal salvation from all sin, and that we ought therefore to forsake our sins, with assurance that in so doing we have God for our helper and that by him we are well able to live holy and unblamable. That we may make an open and united confession of this our belief and more effectually assist each other in searching the Scriptures and in overcoming sin, we constitute ourselves a Society, and agree to be governed by the following regulations :

ARTICLE I.—All the acts of the Society shall require for their validity the unanimous vote of the members present when the acts are proposed.

ARTICLE II.—The officers of the Society shall be a Moderator and a Secretary, with the usual duties, to be chosen at the beginning of each year and at such other times as shall be necessary.

ARTICLE III.—The Society shall meet at some appointed place on the first day of every week and at such other times as may be necessary or expedient.

ARTICLE IV.—The chief business of the meetings of the Society shall be to assist each other by discussion and exhortation in the faith of salvation from sin.

ARTICLE V.—Any person may become a member of the Society by signing this Constitution, and any member may withdraw by requesting the Secretary to erase his name.

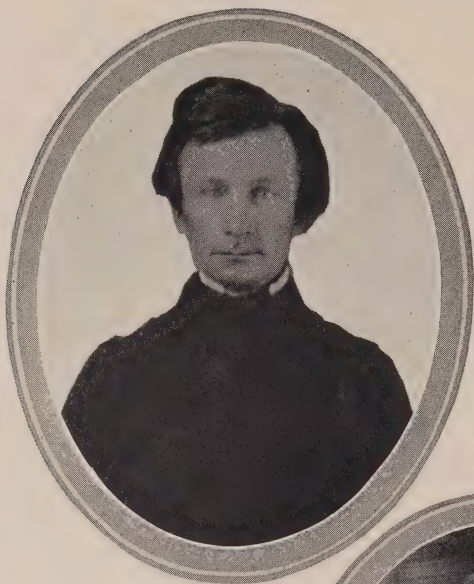
ARTICLE VI.—It shall be the duty of the Society to alter and enlarge the confession of faith and the system of measures proposed in this Constitution as light shall be given and as reason shall be found in the word of God.

The Society of Inquiry was an outgrowth from what Noyes earlier called the Putney Bible School.<sup>1</sup> Money for the support of

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, Chapter XXXI.







JOHN R. MILLER



CHARLOTTE A. (NOYES) MILLER

## Beginnings of Organization at Putney

the School and for the publication of *The Witness* had thus far come as voluntary gifts from Noyes's father and mother and from his wife, supplemented by small receipts from subscribers. The financial problem had as yet hardly emerged into consciousness, and in the constitution of the Society of Inquiry there is no reference to property.

On the 5th of February 1841, while the Society of Inquiry was in process of formation, Noyes's father divided his estate among his eight children. The amount that fell to the four who belonged to the School was \$19,920.00, comprising two farms besides dwellings and other investments. The only important additions to this original capital came from Noyes's wife, whose total gifts amounted to not less than \$16,000.00, and from John R. Miller, who gave \$2000.00. These amounts, with \$200.00 contributed by John L. Skinner and \$200.00 by the Cragins, brought the total investment up to a trifle over \$38,000.00. From this time the Association of Perfectionists at Putney had a clearly recognized economic side, and instead of The Putney Bible School or The Society of Inquiry soon was called The Putney Corporation.

The nucleus of the Putney Corporation, which in fact dated from 1838, consisted of Noyes, his wife, his mother, his sisters Harriet and Charlotte, and his brother George.

The first person from without the family who joined heart and hand with Noyes was John L. Skinner, a young teacher of Quaker parentage, who lived at Westmoreland, New Hampshire. Notwithstanding bitter opposition from his relatives he came to Putney in October 1839, after correspondence and visits, to assist on *The Witness*. He lived with Noyes and at first "paid board," but in February 1840 he was given larger responsibilities and became virtually a member of the family. He married Noyes's sister Harriet in February 1841.

The Cragins came in September 1840. John R. Miller joined in April 1841, and married Noyes's sister Charlotte the following September.

These were all on the ground and one in heart while communism was still inchoate. They constituted the original group of "central members," an informal board, never elective, which, added to and subtracted from as the years passed, always governed and led the Community.

After the Putney Corporation came into possession of its capital a number of persons who had long been in sympathy but owned no property were admitted to membership: Fanny White, Fanny Lord, Isaac Palmer and his wife Polly, all from the East Part,

## The Putney Community

whose conversion to Perfectionism dated back to 1836; Clifford and Sally Clark, uneducated and boorish; Sally Cobb, an early Putney Perfectionist; Sarah Somers, a young girl from New York City who had been a helper in the Cragin family; Harvey Bowles, a journeyman printer, who helped on *The Witness*; William Sherwood and his wife Lauretta, who belonged to the Newark group. Sherwood was a carpenter, and came in season to superintend the building of the Perfectionist chapel and store.

Noyes was now ready to open wider the door of his "theological seminary." George, David and Alexander Wilder, of Verona, New York, had been brought up in the Dutton School of Perfectionists, and were therefore prejudiced against organization. But in January 1841 George Wilder visited Noyes to observe personally the Putney Perfectionists. Noyes invited him and his two brothers to come to Putney as Bible students. They were tall, raw-boned youths, above the average in intelligence. Alexander, the youngest, was preparing for college when he accepted Noyes's offer.

Feeling insecure about John B. Lyvere, who had been accused of improper intimacy with women, and desiring to keep him under observation, Noyes invited him to join the Corporation. In October 1841 after the death of his wife, Mr. Lyvere came to Putney. A short time previously Almira Edson, a young woman from Halifax, Vermont, whose letters had aroused the sympathy of the Putney Perfectionists, became a member. These two were expelled in September 1842.

Stephen R. Leonard of New Haven and Lemuel H. Bradley of Meriden, subscribers to *The Witness*, after preliminary correspondence and conversation arrived at Putney in March 1843. Leonard was an expert printer, and his skill in this art was of inestimable value to the Community. He married Fanny White, and Bradley married Sarah Somers.

Besides these twenty-eight adults there were nine children: Theodore R. Noyes, son of John H. and Harriet A. Noyes; Joseph J. Skinner, son of John L. and Harriet H. Skinner; George and Charles Cragin, sons of George and Mary Cragin; three children of Clifford and Sally Clark; and two children of Isaac and Polly Palmer.

Thus at the end of March 1843 thirty-five persons were being supported by the common purse. There were no further additions until the commencement of Complex Marriage in 1846.

## Beginnings of Organization at Putney

### NOYES'S STATEMENT OF THE LYVERE-EDSON CASE 1841-2

Almira Edson evidently supposed in coming to live with us, that she had found not only a refuge from the contempt and abuse of the world but a place where licentiousness would be to some extent permitted. Her spirit soon became a torment to me and my family, and the burden would have been intolerable had we not hoped for her reformation. I studied her character, and finally at about the time Lyvere came to Putney I told her, that she had been a coquette all her days and had brought upon herself by her vicious manners the disgrace which she called her "misfortune." I foresaw the danger of a foolish amour between her and Lyvere, and when I was about to leave for Belchertown I particularly cautioned him against imprudence. Soon after I went she began to court him. He resisted at first, but within a few days they became constant companions, and their behavior was the scandal of the neighborhood. When I came home, they asked my leave to marry after they had made all the arrangements. I spoke favorably, only advising them to wait until they were better acquainted. But when I learned how disgracefully they had carried on their courtship, I determined to clear myself of all connivance, and I plainly and severely reproved them. At this time I published two numbers of *The Spiritual Moralist*, and urged upon them the principles of those papers: that we ought to set brotherly love above sexual love, and that true love was not the blind instinct of brutes, but was founded on confidence and proportioned to worth. Knowing that neither of them had any good ground of confidence in the other I opposed the marriage for the present. They however were in a hurry, and on the first occasion of my absence from home stole away like thieves in the night to Hinsdale and were married.



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NOYES TO JOHN L. SKINNER

Belchertown, September 24, 1842.

*Dear Brother Skinner:*

Harriet's letter containing an account of the proceedings of Mr. Lyvere and Miss Edson came to hand last night. I have been perplexed about their case for a considerable time, but I thank God that now the path of duty is plain. On the third page of this sheet is a preamble and resolution which expresses my mind. The charge is single, definite, undeniable. The greater part of my labor during the summer was to establish subordination, and now a case comes up which tests the results. We are called upon to say whether we value subordination more than friendship. I wish it to be understood that our present action is not on the merits of the clandestine marriage, but simply on the matter of insubordination. Please present the resolution to every responsible member of the Corporation (the parties concerned of course excepted), and take the signature of every one who is willing thus to express loyalty to our associated interests. Then communicate the result to the parties in a quiet, civil manner, without reproaching or contending with them. I hope there will be perfect unity of judgment and action and as little gossip as possible. Please keep a faithful memorandum of all that relates to this affair.

Yours truly,

JOHN H. NOYES.

Whereas faithful subordination is essential to the welfare of our Corporation, and whereas John B. Lyvere and Almira Edson by a clandestine marriage in defiance of the known will of the acknowledged head of the Corporation have committed an act of gross and deliberate insubordination; therefore,

## Beginnings of Organization at Putney

Resolved that our connection with them be dissolved, and that they be requested to withdraw from the Corporation.

The resolution was unanimously approved.

Until the summer of 1842 our Association had no formal regulations. Every one did what was right in his own eyes. The affair of Lyvere and Miss Edson convinced me that we must institute subordination. I saw that unless we did so our households might be turned into brothels. I therefore, with direct reference to their case, introduced at a meeting of the Association the following paper :

### FIRST PRINCIPLES

We are associated for the specific purpose of publishing the gospel. It is as necessary and as consistent with republicanism that we should have a foreman and institute subordination as that a cotton factory should do so. We require nobody to join us or remain with us. We have the right to adopt rules for ourselves as a body, leaving individuals to submit to them or separate from us as they choose. Unless we do this we cannot act as one man nor protect ourselves from the disorderly doings of individual members.

How shall we decide who is the right man for foreman? If the spirit of pride reigns among us, each will claim submission to his own opinion. If the spirit of subordination reigns among us, each will say, I am ready to let God set my brother over me, and I will heartily submit to his judgment however it may differ from my own. The several officers of our organization should have unlimited control over those below them. It should be the business of each subordinate not to dispute and resist his superior officer, but to give his opinion in the shape of coun-

## The Putney Community

sel when called for and then act according to the judgment of his superior whether it agrees with his counsel or not.

The Bible way of appointing officers may be seen in the organization of the Primitive Church. God commissioned Christ; Christ appointed the apostles; the apostles appointed deacons and other subordinate officers. The first deacons, it is true, were selected by the people. But this was done by order of the apostles and was therefore no exception to the principle that all authority in the church came from above and not from beneath.

This theocratic theory must be modified to admit the communication of authority in more channels than one. While Christ ruled the church by the apostles, yet he also appointed prophets. But whenever he gave orders by prophets he sent proof of their appointment and did not exercise this mode of authority to oppose his other officers.

If our organization is from God, it is not liable to the objections which are justly urged against despotic governments. We can trust God to order our measures and appoint our officers, though we could not man. If no God is recognized, the next greatest source of authority is undoubtedly the people; but if a God is recognized, all officers must derive their authority from him.

1. Are these the true principles of a theocratic government?
2. Is John H. Noyes the man for president?

These questions were unanimously decided in the affirmative.

After the Cragins arrived in September 1840 a warfare with the "lusts and affections of the flesh" began. There was much exhortation in the Corporation meetings to "bring the body into subjection, and to take the opportunity which the winter season offered to steal time from the world for meditation and improvement of mind." The members arose at five o'clock, and spent the first half-hour of the day studying the Bible. The remainder of the forenoon was devoted to printing, cultivating the soil and other





THE PERFECTIONIST STORE AND CHAPEL AT PUTNEY, VERMONT



## Beginnings of Organization at Putney

outward employments. In the afternoon all gathered at one of the houses and for three hours cultivated the mind and spirit. The first hour was given to individual study of some topic previously selected, then an hour to discussion with the aim of arriving at a unanimous conclusion, finally an hour to readings from books bearing on the Bible, such as Prideaux *Connection Between the Old and New Testaments* and Jahn's *Biblical Archæology*. A school was kept for the children in the morning. That the women might take part in the afternoon exercises, only one meal was served each day; the members helped themselves at other times in the pantry. After the completion of the Chapel, because of the belief that the freshest part of the day should be devoted to education, the session for study was changed from the afternoon to the morning hours from nine to twelve o'clock.

Inevitably under such a regime the material interests of the Corporation sometimes suffered. But Noyes was unconcerned. One day when Cragin, who was head farmer, opened up his budget of troubles, Noyes said: "If the growth of your faith and the improvement of your mind require you to sit still half the time, freely obey that instinct. I would much rather that our land should run to waste than that you should fail of a spiritual harvest."

Of the thirty-five members nearly all lived in the three dwellings owned by the Noyes brothers and sisters. Noyes and his wife were the responsible heads at the house he had built in 1839, the Skinners and Millers at the Noyes homestead, and the Cragins at the Campbell house. The principal sources of income were the two Noyes farms, and a store which Miller had started after selling his interest in the partnership of Miller & Wheeler. Each member had his post in the business organization and worked part of the day. Miller acting as financier for the whole group saw that each had enough to eat and wear.

Formal communism in the Putney Corporation was a development of almost imperceptible growth. Property was held in the name of the original owner throughout the Putney period and indeed for many years after the removal to Oneida. Some of the members continued to live in their own houses, and followed their usual occupations. "At the same time," wrote Noyes in a letter dated January 10, 1843, "the spirit of love naturally led us into a sort of community of goods." But he added: "Our Community has no constitution nor written laws. Our object in coming together was not to form a Community after the fashion of the Shakers and Fourierites, but simply to publish the gospel and help one another in spiritual things. We have found it necessary to in-

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investigate many new problems in social economy, but it is difficult as yet to tell what form of social life we shall ultimately take. We shall follow the leadings of God and, I doubt not, shall find a way to live as becometh saints."

## Chapter 7

### SOURCES OF NEW MATERIAL 1842-1845

IN JANUARY 1842 the Rev. Mr. George L. Oviatt, Congregational minister of Belchertown, Massachusetts, wrote to the Rev. Mr. Tyler Thatcher, his colleague at Hawley, that Colonel and Mrs. Joshua Longley by their Perfectionist views were "doing more hurt in Belchertown than fifty Tom Paines," and urged that they be dealt with immediately by Mr. Thatcher's church, of which they were still nominally members. Colonel Longley appealed to Noyes for help. Noyes went to Belchertown February 2nd, and after holding four meetings wrote home that the people seemed "on the verge of a tremendous spiritual revolution." He continued to preach, making it his object "not to excite and amuse, but solely to instruct in the great rudiments of the gospel." The Rev. Mr. Oviatt replied that the doctrine of salvation from sin led to all manner of evil, especially licentiousness; and members of his church circulated the story that Noyes was the man who "undertook to cast out devils at Brimfield<sup>1</sup> and got the Devil into himself."

Early in March Charles Olds, a convert to Perfectionism, was expelled from the Belchertown church, and the Longleys were subjected to an examination by a committee of the church at Hawley. Noyes wrote from Belchertown that he was much engaged in piloting the brethren out of their covenant obligations in an orderly and decent manner as an example for others. Soon a "Declaration of Believers in Belchertown," written by him, was presented to the Congregational Church. It contained these statements: "We hold it to be the inalienable right and the unchangeable duty of every rational being to pursue truth wherever it leads. This right we did not surrender, this duty we could not make void, when we entered into covenant with you. Indeed this right and duty you yourselves assent to when you justify the Primitive Church in

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 196-202.

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abandoning Judaism, when you applaud the Reformers for renouncing the Roman Church, when you boast the noble spirit of your Puritan forefathers in their secession from English prelacy. . . . We find ourselves therefore under the absolute necessity of coming out from among you; and in so doing instead of being factious heretics we are in our own view genuine primitive Congregationalists, the successors of Robinson, of Luther, of Paul, of all who have ever suffered the reproach of heresy for the sake of truth."

Meanwhile Noyes wrote from Belchertown: "Oviatt tells his church not to investigate Perfectionism lest they be bewitched, but says the clergy have appointed a committee to investigate. A report is being circulated that the Putney Perfectionists live in sexual promiscuity. Thank God I am equipped for war on the field of morality."

After leaving Belchertown Noyes preached at Leverett, New-ark, New Haven and Hartford. He was obliged to force himself away, the people were so anxious to hear him.

Noyes and Cragin left home again in September to preach and secure subscribers. They went first to Hawley and were present at the formal excommunication of the Longleys. A pamphlet by the Rev. Mr. Thatcher had aroused a demand for more information, and Noyes posted notices of a meeting, concerning which Cragin writes:

Notwithstanding inclement weather the meeting was well attended. Mr. Noyes offered a variety of proofs not only that he had not been licentious, but that his whole influence had been used to put down licentiousness. Mr. Thatcher then took the floor and held it till nearly dark. As he claimed yet three hours in which to finish his argument, we proposed to adjourn until nine o'clock the next morning, in order that we might have a fair time to reply. This was agreed to.

It was dark and rainy when we left the hall. We soon retired to our room for prayer and consultation. Mr. Noyes had been suffering for two days from a painful boil, and now in addition he found himself attacked by sore throat and hoarseness. It seemed as though Providence for some wise end was permitting the powers of darkness to disable him from fulfilling his

## Sources of New Material

engagement. "You must do the talking tomorrow," said he, "for I shall not be able to speak aloud." But in the night a victory was gained. Mr. Noyes said to me, "I shall speak according to the program if it tears my throat in pieces."

The morrow came, and with it an excited crowd. The hall was too small and the assembly adjourned to the meeting-house. As we took our seats I was conscious that we were looked upon as criminals. Some had thought that we would run away the night before and allow the case to go against us by default. Mr. Thatcher and his friends organized the meeting. The reverend gentleman then resumed his attack with evident assurance of a signal victory. During the two or three hours in which he occupied the pulpit he made so many erroneous statements and put constructions upon our writings so wickedly unfair, that I could with difficulty refrain from rising and denouncing him as a liar. When he concluded his remarks, the atmosphere was dark and heavy with prejudice.

At one o'clock Mr. Noyes was permitted to continue his defense. For two hours notwithstanding his hoarseness he poured forth a stream of eloquence such as I had never heard before. He replied to every new charge that had been brought against us, and completely vindicated the ideas held by Perfectionists concerning marriage. Then he presented the fundamental principles of the new covenant, insisting particularly upon the necessity of being led by the spirit. Gradually the atmosphere of the meeting changed until, when Mr. Noyes had finished, the audience signified its verdict by leaving the house while Mr. Thatcher was attempting a feeble reply.

Noyes and Cragin went next to Brimfield, the "land of ill-fame" in Perfectionist history.<sup>1</sup> What little they found remaining of the disorders of 1835 they exhorted the believers to "purge out thoroughly" by a united and public testimony and by executing

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, Chap. XIX.—G. W. N.



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judgment on offenders. Resuming their journey they held meetings at Meriden, Hamden, North Haven, New Haven and Prospect in Connecticut, and at Newark in New Jersey. They reached home November 10th much fatigued.

In answer to repeated urgent requests that he renew his preaching campaign at Belchertown Noyes wrote to Longley in January 1843, that he had resolved to spend the coming year at home striving to improve the paper and make it self-supporting. He was brought to this resolution partly by the throat trouble contracted the previous year, and partly by the financial results of 1842, which showed that the paper was a dead loss of seven or eight hundred dollars, while the industrial operations barely held even. However he sent Palmer to help Longley at Belchertown and Hawley, and commissioned Cragin to commence an offensive war in towns where Perfectionism had never been preached.

Previous to his throat disablement Noyes had considered the possibility of a campaign in New York City in the spring of 1843. The Millerites were particularly active. They had set February 15th and when that failed April 3rd as the date for the end of the world, and the time seemed opportune for presenting the claims of Perfectionism with its radical stand that the second coming of Christ was past. But on March 21st he announced to Cragin his change of plan in the following note:

I shall not attempt to preach in New York or anywhere else for the present. I think my throat trouble is a "thorn in the flesh" lest I should preach above measure. I am more and more persuaded that our strength is to lie in publishing rather than in preaching. The invention of printing has changed everything. Our congregations, wherever they are, must do their own preaching, and we must devote ourselves to training a regiment of writers.

During 1843-4 Noyes remained quietly at home thinking and writing. The paper was enlarged, and was published regularly twice a month. Perfectionism as a complete theological system now took definite, authoritative form. Thus a rallying-point was given, and aliens were repelled. More active measures were taken to obtain new subscribers and confirm the faith of the old. Cragin, Palmer, David and George Wilder worked in this field. Soon we

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begin to hear of men and women who later became bone and sinew of the Oneida Community: William H. Woolworth, William A. Hinds, the Kellogg, Olds, Sears, Sibley and Thayer families in Massachusetts; Jonathan Burt, John Abbott, Sewall Newhouse, Marquis L. Worden, Seymour and Daniel Nash, Henry Thacker, Isaac Seymour, Erastus H. Hamilton, Eveliza Hyde in Central New York; William R. Inslee, George Campbell, Margaret Langstaff, Elizabeth Whitfield in Newark; the Allens, Clarks, Nortons and Bristols in Connecticut; James, Harriet, Philena and Ellen Baker in Putney; Albert and Heman Kinsley, Alvah Barron, Cornelius Higgins, Elias Hall, Levi Joslyn, Sophia Dunn in Northern Vermont.

Late in November 1844 Noyes received a letter from Henry W. Burnham, a young Millerite preacher of Cambridge in Northern Vermont, which led to a closer acquaintance with Perfectionists in that region.

The pioneer Perfectionists in Northern Vermont were Jesse Mudget and his wife Rhoda, an intelligent, well-to-do pair. By their invitation Truair, a revivalist, came to Cambridge in March 1833 preaching perfect holiness and union of all Christians. Church members flocked to the Unionist standard. Not long afterward came Tertius Strong, whom we know as the Perfectionist pastor of Brimfield, Massachusetts, and Charles Patten, a brother-in-law of Chauncey Dutton. They held protracted meetings, rent the churches, and added hundreds to the Perfectionist brotherhood.

Tertius Strong came again to Cambridge in July 1835, this time accompanied by Marietta Nash of Brimfield. The Mudgets had heard of the scandals at Brimfield and Southampton, but they again received Strong with friendly welcome. A run of antinomianism followed hard upon this visit. Mudget voiced in a letter to Boyle the familiar antinomian sentiment: "The Lord himself has become my teacher; I submit to no human teachers." His house became the scene of scandalous liberties. On one occasion indignation against Strong and Patten rose so high that a mob surrounded the house and discharged a volley of musketry. A reaction followed, and for several years Perfectionism barely held its own in Northern Vermont.

Cragin went to Bakersfield in January 1845 to become acquainted with the Northern Vermont subscribers, and stayed with Norman and Sophia Dunn.<sup>1</sup> He sought out Burnham, whose letter

<sup>1</sup> Norman Dunn died before the break-up at Putney, but in accordance with his dying wish his wife and their children Leonard and Fidelia joined the Community at Oneida.—G. W. N.

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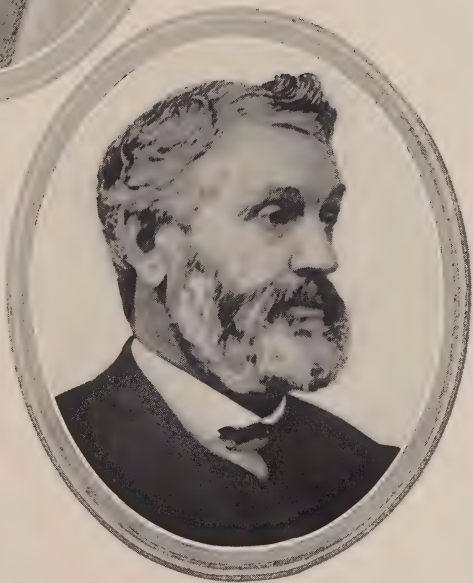
the previous fall had arrested attention, and they held several public meetings. Cragin then wrote that, although he had prolonged his stay, the people would not permit him to leave, that he had removed many obstacles to full confidence in Noyes, and that Burnham was advancing cautiously toward acceptance of the entire Putney faith. Burnham visited the Putney Corporation in March, and on his return wrote to Noyes that "great good would accrue" from his visit. His recantation of Millerism was about to appear in *The Perfectionist*, and he had in every way the stamp of the Putney school.

The following summer Cragin went to Northern Vermont again. He found that the Mudgetts were still the greatest stumbling-block to the spread of Perfectionism in that region. But notwithstanding their influence the work he had commenced was already bearing abundant fruit. The believers were enthusiastic for the plan of publishing a Perfectionist Compendium, and would contribute money liberally. They saw clearly that the Putney School must organize in order to draw a line between themselves and those classed with them but not of them. As Cragin was leaving for home Albert Kinsley said: "Tell Brother Noyes that I am with him in heart and in purse."



JOHN L. SKINNER

Drawn by  
Charlotte A. Miller



HENRY W. BURNHAM





## Chapter 8

### WARFARE WITH DEATH MAY 1834–FEBRUARY 1845

THE germ of Noyes's theory of victory over death will be found in that seed time of his career, the three weeks he spent in New York City in May 1834. He summarized the conclusion to which he then came as follows:

If I pass through the form of dying, yet in fact I shall never die. But I am not a debtor to the Devil even in regard to the form of dying. "No man taketh my life from me. I wot not whether I shall choose life or death." But this I know, that if I live till the Kingdom of God fully comes, which I believe is coming, I shall never die in fact or in form.

His first published statement on victory over death is in this paragraph from *The Witness*, December 20, 1838:

The glorious hope which fills the foreground of the prospect of those who wait for the finishing of the mystery of God is presented in this passage of Isaiah: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

From this time the Perfectionists at Putney had a growing interest in the subject of overcoming disease by faith.

In May 1840 Noyes visited his friend David Harrison at Meriden. He found that Harrison had been confined to the house for two weeks. His temperature and pulse were alarming, and he

## The Putney Community

was unable to turn himself in bed. He had "fallen into the hands of the doctor, who was dosing him with opium, cohosh and emetics." Noyes persuaded him to quit his medicines, and gave him instead "large doses of faith with moderate doses of brandy and wine," meanwhile watching with him day and night. The fever left within twenty-four hours. On the fourth day Harrison took a ride in the morning, went fishing in the afternoon, and at the end of a week declared that his health was better than it had been for years.

But Noyes was always careful to put upon the patient the responsibility for adopting faith treatment. Advising John B. Lyvere in regard to the care of his wife, who was ill, he wrote in January 1841: "I would recommend to you the rule which I adopt in all cases, to call a physician or give medicine if the sick person wishes it. I think every one should be allowed to act in this matter according to the dictates of his own conscience and judgment."

While Noyes was absent on his mission to Massachusetts in September 1842 his colleague, John L. Skinner, published in *The Witness* an article containing this statement: "Although we admit the importance of obeying the physical laws, we believe that perfect and permanent health can be established only by gaining a pure and healthy spirit."

Noyes was at this very moment suffering from the sore throat and boil which had so nearly disabled him at Belchertown. He therefore wrote to his wife: "I like much what is said in the last *Witness* on the healing art. But I advise that such testimony be given cautiously and somewhat sparingly. I do not wish to take ground on that subject faster than I can thoroughly defend it. . . . Let us put on the whole armor of Bible physiology before we attempt much offensive warfare against the medical profession."

As a result of his maladies Noyes at first feared that he might be compelled to quit and return home. "But," said he in a letter to his wife, "I was enabled to bring my faith to bear. I said in my heart, 'God has sent me forth. I will not forfeit the engagements I have made if I die in the field, and I will not go home if God gives strength to go farther.' In this spirit I went through the work that was set before me at Uxbridge and Brimfield, and to my comfortable surprise before I reached Belchertown again I was well. . . . I write these things for the encouragement of all who prefer faith and courage to doctors and medicines."

Notwithstanding this temporary relief Noyes's sore throat returned. On December 4th he was a subject of prayer, and beginning January 1, 1843, he ceased public speaking and attending meeting for over a year.

## Warfare with Death

David Harrison was again taken desperately ill at the end of April 1843, consulted a doctor, and took medicine. Cragin was immediately sent to his aid. Though "sickened at the sight of the vials of nostrums" on the table at which he was writing, he did not oppose Harrison's request that medicines be "administered scientifically." Harrison died on May 2nd.

Writing to Joshua Longley a month later for information about Mrs. Longley, who was ill, Noyes said: "We rely on God and spiritual medicines, not on doctors and drugs. This subject however is so buried in the rubbish of tradition and unbelief, that it will require time for us to get back on the ground of the Primitive Church. Meanwhile we must walk in wisdom toward them that are without."

And he wrote to Eli Wadsworth: "The Devil tries to drive us ahead too fast in our professions. Salvation from sin is the first step of Christian faith, and salvation from disease and death is the last. Between these points lies a considerable space, over which we must fight our way patiently. Suffering and death are often employed as a means of perfecting the spirit. Faith is the principal thing, bodily health secondary. We first learn the faith of endurance, then the faith of resistance. The door of faith is as wide open to us as it was to the Primitive Church. But the healing of the body is not like that of the soul, provided for in a generic way, but is reserved as God's discretionary prerogative. Spiritual instinct is the true pilot, and in due time we shall learn to follow it with certainty. I feel that God is calling me to the faith of resistance, and I know that I have healed diseases not only in myself but in others. All things point toward a restoration of the whole of primitive Christianity."

### HARRIET A. NOYES'S JOURNAL

July 16, 1843.—This afternoon several members of the Corporation called at our house, and we had a social meeting. John said that a month or two ago he was pressed out of measure by a spirit of disease and death. Almost all the members had been sick and disheartened, and hung upon him like a weight. Then came Mr. Prindle with his testimony against the salvation of the body. Added to this was the news of Mr. Harrison's death, like a pail of cold water. Altogether it roused the spirit

## The Putney Community

of God in him, and made him determined to act no longer on the defensive. He set Mr. Skinner at work writing the articles on physiology which have been published of late in *The Perfectionist*, and he went into the enemies' camp in the cases of Miss B. and Mrs. U.

Mr. Palmer said that his experience had been similar to John's this spring. He had felt much oppressed and very weak, insomuch that he was tempted to think he should hold out only this year. But within a few days past he had felt young again and able to work.

Mrs. Lord said that she felt at liberty to call a physician or use medicine in the same way she would receive spiritual teaching through any means God would appoint. John had learned the same lesson of late.

### CHARLOTTE A. MILLER'S "REFLECTIONS UPON THE PRESENT CRISIS" JANUARY 29, 1844

From various sources I hear that the difficulty in John's throat is no better, and that the prospect is rather discouraging unless God shall directly interpose. He himself says that for the past year he has been working as in the face of death, and that, should he now depart, sufficient has already been done to insure the final triumph of the gospel as he has proclaimed it. The thought of his departure seems insupportable unless God makes known that it is his will.

Desiring to establish the paper on a permanent basis and feeling that his own health might not permit him to continue much longer as editor, Noyes in August 1844 proposed that Eli Wadsworth, a young subscriber and contributor living in New York City, be invited to Putney for the purpose of qualifying himself for this position. While negotiations were in progress toward this end Wadsworth developed symptoms of tuberculosis and wrote to Noyes for advice in regard to going south. Noyes replied:



## Warfare with Death

I do not like to take the responsibility of advising you to go or stay. Yet if you should think it best to go, I shall be well pleased. My impression is, that if I were in your situation I would go to some place in the south where I could maintain myself in business and settle there for life. I have sometimes wished that we had a settlement of believers in the south, where our small-chested, coughing brothers and sisters could find a home when they need a warmer climate. My own health for a year or two past has been such that I have often cast a longing look toward summer lands. I make up my mind however to stand at my post as long as I am needed there, let the consequences be what they may. But if you should make a home for yourself in Florida, I shall be strongly tempted to pay you a visit one of these years. If you should need money for this purpose, let me know as you would a brother, and I will send what is necessary.

Soon after receiving this letter Wadsworth went to St. Augustine, Florida, where he died the following April. In August of the same year occurred the death of George W. Wilder.

NOYES IN *The Perfectionist* FEBRUARY 22, 1845

The reign of death is an evil second only to the reign of sin. The gospel brings redemption for the body as well as for the soul. A great variety of facts in our own experience and in the experience of others with whom we are acquainted have constrained us to recognize the close relation between salvation from sin and salvation from disease and death. While we do not call the phenomena which have been presented miracles or pretend that we are insured against disease and death, yet we have evidence, which we could not thrust out of sight if we would, that God is making war on death in connection with the gospel of salvation from sin.



## Chapter 9

### ADVANCE INTO COMMUNISM OF PROPERTY

1842-1846

**I**N the midst of the Belchertown campaign of 1842 Joshua Longley, the most prominent of the Belchertown Perfectionists, sent Noyes an urgent request for three hundred dollars to tide him over a financial crisis and save the cause from reproach. Miller advanced the amount from money needed by the store. In the fall Longley again called loudly for help. Noyes replied that the Corporation could not, unless by some unforeseen good luck, meet its own obligations. After the death of David Harrison his widow with four children came upon the Corporation for support. They were crowded into the Campbell house with the Cragins and Mr. Bradley. In November 1843 Noyes wrote to Longley: "For my sake, for the sake of peace and confidence between me and Miller, I entreat you to take decisive measures to have that note paid at once." But Longley was unable to raise the money. Meanwhile trade at the Corporation store had dropped to a low ebb owing to the policy, which had been adopted, of selling only for cash. Miller was compelled to borrow for the running expenses of the Corporation as well as to make up the losses of the publishing department. When Noyes and Cragin returned from their Connecticut trip they had money enough for only one stage fare, and Cragin walked part of the way. There was still another complication. Noyes's younger brother George became of age on December 4, 1843, and the question of his future and the disposition of his share in his father's estate, which Noyes had thus far held for him in trust, was involved.

Under these circumstances Noyes appealed to his subscribers to lift the load of publication which the Corporation must otherwise throw down, sent a circular letter to each member of the Corporation urging temperance and economy, modified the cash rule in the store to allow credit consistent with safe, simple business, and arranged with his brother George to become Miller's partner in

## Advance into Communism of Property

the store, transferring to George as his share in his father's estate one-half interest in the lot where the store stood and one-half interest in the Campbell farm, where he and Miller were to live. Finally, for the purpose of registering the changes that had taken place and simplifying still further the pecuniary relations between the members of the Corporation, Noyes, Skinner, Miller and George formed a new partnership "without keeping an account of their individual expenses," a provision which, writes Mrs. Harriet A. Noyes in her journal, "we all think will unite us more closely than ever."

### CONTRACT OF PARTNERSHIP FEBRUARY 26, 1844

The undersigned hereby enter into a partnership, the conditions of which are as follows :

1. All property of every kind, which we are now severally possessed of or which shall hereafter come into our possession so long as we remain in the Corporation, shall be held as the property of the Corporation; and all debts, which we now owe or may hereafter contract so long as we remain in the Corporation, shall be held as the debts of the Corporation.

2. The whole property thus converted into joint-stock and all its increase shall be controlled by the Corporation in its united capacity; and the unanimous agreement of the partners shall be necessary in all important transactions.

3. Any of the partners may withdraw from the Corporation on the first of January of any year, or at any other time with the consent of the Corporation.

4. In case of withdrawal or dissolution the whole property of the Corporation at the time shall be appraised, either by the agreement of the partners or by impartial men chosen by them, and each withdrawing partner shall be entitled to such share of the property as shall be proportioned to his previous investments; and in case any one of the partners shall be removed from the Corporation by death, his heirs shall receive his share of the property in the same manner.

## The Putney Community

5. We agree that the following estimate of our several investments until the present time shall be the basis of calculation in determining the proportion of the joint property to which we or our heirs shall be severally entitled in case of withdrawal, dissolution or death:

John H. Noyes	invests	\$ 7.980.00
John R. Miller	"	7.220.00
John L. Skinner	"	5.420.00
George W. Noyes	"	5.320.00
		<hr/>
		\$25.940.00

6. In case any one of the partners shall hereafter obtain from extraneous sources (as by inheritance) and invest in the joint-stock any additional property, the value of that property shall be added to his investment stated above, and shall increase accordingly the proportion to which he or his heirs shall be entitled in case of withdrawal, dissolution or death.

7. In case any interest or annuities shall be paid by any of the partners for any stock invested by them, or in case any repayment of stock shall be required by persons from whom any of the partners have received it, or in case any losses shall be sustained on account of debts or liabilities contracted before the partners were connected with each other in September 1841, such payments or losses shall be deducted from the investments of the partners on whom they fall, and shall diminish accordingly their proportion in the event of division.

8. The expenses and labors of each of the partners, with his family and necessary dependents, shall be held as the expenses and labors of the Corporation, and shall not be charged or credited to the individuals so as to increase or diminish the shares to which they or their heirs shall be severally entitled in case of division or death.

## Advance into Communism of Property

9. Each of the partners shall have a copy of this contract signed by all of them; and in case any additions to or deductions from the investments shall be made, such additions or deductions with the name of the partners concerned shall be endorsed on each copy; and those endorsements shall be the evidence of the additions or deductions to be made in case of division.

Witnesses { Lemuel H. Bradley  
              { Maria Clark

John H. Noyes  
John R. Miller  
John L. Skinner  
George W. Noyes

With the formation of this new partnership the Corporation began to overcome the difficulties against which they had contended for a year. Sufficient pledges were received from subscribers and the publication of *The Perfectionist* was resumed. "Dying and behold we live," Noyes wrote to his wife, "must be our motto for the present. That is better than dying altogether."

Applicants for admission to the Corporation now began to be heard. Noyes turned them away with the statement that, since the object of the Corporation was the publication of the gospel of salvation from sin, neither the attention nor the expense required by a primarily communistic enterprise could be spared.

Mrs. Harriet A. Noyes's grandfather died in August of this year, and as one of his three heirs she received nine thousand dollars. This completely relieved the financial pressure, and led to an enlarged "plan of operations," which is thus set forth by Noyes:

Money-making is the soul of the world. Therefore in order to subdue the world to Christ we must carry religion into money-making. We have begun right in getting the fullness of the gospel first. To keep religion always in control we must establish a theological seminary as a permanent and increasing basis of printing and preaching. Having thus set up a spiritual bank, we must as soon as we obtain the means establish wholesale commercial agencies in Boston and New York. These agencies will furnish facilities for distributing our spiritual



## The Putney Community

currency in this country. Then we must advance into foreign commerce, and as our means enlarge we must cover the ocean with our ships and the whole world with the knowledge of God. This is a great scheme, but not too great for God. Let every man, woman and child among us take hold with the heart of a hero and the meek subordination of a servant, and within ten years we will plant the standard of Christ on the highest battlements of the world.

The "Contract of Partnership" adopted on February 26, 1844, remained in force only until March 9, 1845, when it was superseded by an elaborate "Constitution," of which we quote only the preamble:

For the purpose of sustaining the gospel of salvation from sin and gaining the advantages of union and combined capital we, whose names are hereunto subscribed, enter into entire partnership with each other, and agree to be governed by the following regulations: . . . .

This Constitution was a long step in the direction of organized Communism. Its most significant changes as compared with the Contract of Partnership were these:

First, under the Contract no provision was made for members other than those who invested property. Under the Constitution there were two sorts of members, those who invested time but not property, and those who invested both time and property.

Second, under the Contract there were no officers; the management was in the hands of the partners as a united body. Under the Constitution a President, Secretary and three Directors were chosen annually from among the stockholders; it was their duty to direct the affairs of the Corporation and report at the end of each year. The Secretary, in addition to the usual duties of his office, was required to keep a journal of all important events in the history of the Corporation.

Third, under the Contract unanimity was required in all transactions. Under the Constitution unanimity was required only for the admission of new members. A majority vote of the members could call meetings, elect officers, take action in case of disagree-



## Advance into Communism of Property

ment among the officers, expel members; and a majority vote of the officers was sufficient for the transaction of ordinary business.

Fourth, under the Contract the Corporation guaranteed the economic support of all its members, but there was no reciprocal duty of the members to the Corporation. Under the Constitution the Corporation guaranteed the economic support of all its members, but with the prerequisite that every member should be governed in his "expenses, labors and domestic arrangements" by the officers of the Corporation.

Fifth, under the Contract profit in case of dissolution was divided among stockholders in proportion to the amount of their stock. Under the Constitution profit was divided among all the members, whether stockholders or not, in proportion to length of service. Losses under both instruments fell only on holders of the stock.

After signing this Constitution the Corporation elected John R. Miller President, John L. Skinner Secretary, and John H. Noyes, George Cragin and George W. Noyes Directors. The amount of property invested by the members was as follows:

John H. Noyes.....	\$15.173.00
John R. Miller.....	7.220.00
John L. Skinner.....	5.420.00
George W. Noyes.....	5.320.00
George Cragin.....	200.00
Total.....	<hr/> \$33.333.00

Certificates of investment were issued to the stockholders, and a time-of-admission certificate was issued to Stephen R. Leonard, who was not a stockholder.

Written constitutions were from the beginning foreign to the genius of the Putney and Oneida Communities. They were out of date the day after they were written. The Journal of the Corporation records only one more meeting under the Constitution of March 9th. It was held on February 20, 1846. The officers of the preceding year were all re-elected. A perfunctory financial report was made by the President, showing a nominal gain for the year of \$286.66. The Secretary recorded as of more substantial interest "a very considerable increase of love to God and one another, which is our most valuable capital." Soon the authority and even the existence of the Constitution of March 9th, 1845, were forgotten, and in the later history no other such instrument is found.

## Chapter 10

### STEPS TOWARD A GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF PERFECTIONISTS 1841-1845

HAVING instituted organization among Perfectionists at Putney, Noyes in the winter of 1840-41 published in *The Witness* a series of articles on organization, and called for an expression of opinion. The two responses subjoined are typical. Afterward a number of conventions were held in different parts of the country with the purpose of bringing Perfectionists everywhere into closer relations.

SAMUEL S. GIBBS TO NOYES

Manlius, New York, January 11, 1841.

*To John H. Noyes: . . .*

. As for your organization I cannot agree with you. It is taking the same ground that all the reformers have, viz., all the rest of the organizations are wrong, now we will have a right one. But they soon find theirs no better than the rest. . . . If we are inhabitants of that kingdom which is not of this world, we have all the laws, organizations and social relations that we need. By saying this I do not advocate disorder, nor throw away secondary means. Such persons are in God's divine order. They will do by others as they would be done by; they will be willing to receive spiritual instruction from a little child, or through any source that God sees fit to use, but they cannot receive anything unless it commends itself to their understanding. . . .

Again, you set yourself up as the head of this dispensation,

## Steps Toward a General Organization

and refuse to fellowship as Christians any that do not acknowledge you as such. This looks like exalting self. If you are the head of the church, I do not belong to that church. You take a step beyond Wesley and other reformers. They were not willing to receive that degree of honor men were disposed to give them, but you receive all the honor men will give you and seek more. Jesus saith, "I receive not honor from men; how can ye believe which receive honor one of another." . . .

These are my honest views, which I send you in love. . . .

Yours etc.,

SAMUEL S. GIBBS.

WILLIAM C. GOULD TO GEORGE CRAGIN

Newark, New Jersey, May 17, 1841.

*Dear Brother:*

In January last you invited me to give you my views on church organization. In answer I spoke doubtfully of the expediency of organization among Perfectionists. I must acknowledge that I felt an objection to your proposed plan at Putney as I understood it. From a perusal of a recent number of *The Witness* I am induced to believe that I have been altogether misinformed. . . . Within the last three weeks some of us in this place have succeeded in organizing somewhat upon the plan of the brethren at Putney. . . .

I think the promulgation of your proceedings in Putney will be of service elsewhere, as I suspect it has been with us, in overcoming opposition to organization. This opposition has certainly been very strong. Most Perfectionists regard organization as the most potent agent in perpetuating legal servitude. . . . Whatever may be said about the legal tendency of organization under the old covenant, I insist that it remains to be

## The Putney Community

proved whether this tendency cannot be overcome by believers standing in the experience and knowledge of the new covenant.

I wish you to say to Brother Noyes, that in the matter of securing united action through organization, however others may feel, I am fully with him so far as I understand him; and I trust that he will not suffer any intimations about his aiming at supremacy to interrupt his efforts toward this object. . . .

Yours in Christ,

W. C. GOULD.

NOYES TO WILLIAM C. GOULD

Putney, March 16, 1842.

*Dear Brother Gould:*

When Brother Cragin wrote you, we thought that a convention for the purpose of agreeing on doctrine and instituting organization would be premature. And further for several reasons in the present state of things I should prefer some other place for such a convention than Newark. One of those reasons is that I am not desirous of meeting in such a glare of publicity as would attend a city convention, especially at the period of the great anniversaries.<sup>1</sup> The object I, for one, have in view is not so much to operate directly on the public (which is the object of the anniversaries) as to operate on ourselves. Our convention should be like a marriage, not like an exhibition. I know that tastes differ. Some would have a great public wedding party. But I should prefer a private (not secret) wedding, especially where the parents and relatives are not very friendly to the match. I think we might come together at Putney, or some such country place where Perfectionism is in the ascendant, and lay our foundations of social order in quietness with-

<sup>1</sup> The reference here is to the conventions of the clergy, which at this time were held annually in New York City.—G. W. N.

## Steps Toward a General Organization

out provoking the ridicule and animosity of the dogs and swine that rule the press and public opinion.

Another reason is this: I apprehend that with a few exceptions the Perfectionists of Newark are yet halting between two opinions about the legitimacy of organization under the gospel. If this is the case, our convention would be rather for disputation than for friendly discussion.

This leads me to remark that I have no objection to a convention for discussion at Newark during anniversary week. Such a convention may prepare the way for after-proceedings. I think it is needed and, if the Lord will, I shall attend.

Yours in love and esteem,

JOHN H. NOYES.

A convention of Perfectionists was held at Newark, New Jersey, May 12-14, 1842. E. B. Cunningham was appointed Moderator and J. H. Noyes Secretary. The Moderator after some remarks on the general objects of the meeting proposed that topics for discussion be suggested. Thereupon eight leading questions were presented. As it was evidently impossible to discuss all, it was thought best to take up the most important first and proceed as far as time would allow.

Whether believers were in any sense under law was selected as the first subject of deliberation. Some difference of opinion appeared at first, but "brotherly love prevailed," and in the end unanimity on this subject was obtained.

Next the subject of the second coming of Christ came before the Convention, and the discussion was long and spirited. The subject of baptism was also introduced. As there was however some discrepancy of sentiment in both of these topics it was thought best to leave them, with the other subjects proposed but not discussed, to the deliberations of future conventions.

### RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE NEWARK CONVENTION

MAY 13, 1842

1. In saying that we are not under law we mean that the influence which restrains us from violating the principles of love proceeds not from the law but from the spirit.



## The Putney Community

2. While all the statutes of the Jewish law were abolished in Christ, yet all that is essential in them will remain in full force forever as a law of nature and reason.

3. Christians in the incipient state need instruction, exhortation and command.

4. All who live in sin are still under the law.

5. We disclaim the principles and detest the practices of those who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.

ELI WADSWORTH TO NOYES

July 16, 1843.

*Dear Brother:*

In a conversation with Mrs. Lyvere and E. B. Cunningham they told me that the Association at Putney was a complete monarchy, and that you were acting the part of a tyrant. Prindle told me the same, when he came back here, and he charged upon you the crimes of spiritual tyranny worse than ever you charged upon Latourette.

NOYES TO ELI WADSWORTH

August 3, 1843.

*Dear Brother:*

I have no doubt I shall be a sore trial to the "liberty men." I have formed my notions of organization not from the doctrines of antislavery nor of American democracy, but from the Bible. I believe that the law is for the lawless, and that where the law is abolished God governs spiritually.

WILLIAM C. GOULD TO NOYES

FALL OF 1843

G. C. Stewart on his return from a tour west handed me a copy of the Lyvere-Edson resolution. It put all the Newark

## Steps Toward a General Organization

Perfectionists on the fence, and the lovers of confusion in control for the time being. . . . No objection was felt against your expelling Lyvere and wife from your house and family, but the grand difficulty was that the Society had expelled them from the church, and in so doing had assigned as their reason not that they had walked contrary to Scripture and sinned against God, but that they had done certain things which were contrary to the known will of John H. Noyes. I could not deny that the resolution needed some explanation. The sequel of the whole matter is that an apprehension of your desire for spiritual domination has again been aroused, and stands in the way of your usefulness and the circulation of the paper.

A convention of Perfectionists was held at Manlius Center, New York, May 4-5, 1844. The call was signed by William H. Cook, M. L. Worden and others, and was published in *The Perfectionist*. Alexander Wilder acted as Secretary. Resolutions were passed exalting Christ and the Bible, condemning lawlessness, and expressing distrust of the popular reforms of the day because not based on Christ. William H. Cook in a letter to Noyes May 10th stated that a resolution was proposed adopting *The Perfectionist* as the organ of the fraternity, but owing mainly to the opposition of one man was laid on the table. Cook praised *The Perfectionist* in somewhat qualified terms, but did not sympathize with Noyes's total rejection of Boyle. In doctrine, Cook said, the New York Perfectionists stood on the same ground as the Putney brethren.

It appears from Harriet A. Noyes's journal and Cook's letter that Noyes was prevented from attending this Convention by an attack of severe headache and fever. He commended the meeting however in *The Perfectionist* as "wholesome," and suggested that Perfectionists in other parts of the country define their position in a similar manner.

Another convention was held at Belchertown, Massachusetts, October 6-8, 1844. It met in response to a general invitation. Resolutions were discussed and unanimously adopted substantially as follows:

## The Putney Community

That we regard with deep interest the realization of an external as well as internal union of believers.

That, inasmuch as none but those who are saved from sin are qualified for external union, we will make the salvation of ourselves and others from sin our first endeavor, and will attempt no radical changes in society until we are sure of a sufficient number of faithful men.

That, since the Kingdom of God has already commenced in the heavens, we will neither join nor form any Association that cannot be proved to be a branch of that Kingdom, or that has not ascertained and does not follow the institutions of that Kingdom in regard to marriage and property.

A "Theocratic Conference" convened at Lairdsville, New York, November 15-17, 1844. The call, a brief printed slip, was signed by John B. Foot, Charles Lovett, Alexander Wilder, William S. Hatch, David A. Warren and David Wilder. The Putney Perfectionists were ignored, and none of them attended.

Isaac Seymour of Westmoreland was called to the Chair, and Alexander Wilder was appointed Secretary.

Resolutions were reported by John B. Foot, that "Jesus Christ now claims the immediate government of the world," and that "the saints should at once assert their rights, renounce allegiance to all human dominions, and take the kingdom."

A "Declaration of Independence from the nations of the earth" was reported by David Wilder.

The Resolutions and the Declaration were discussed and adopted, three of the delegates declining to vote.

Immediately after this Conference Alexander Wilder went to Belchertown and attacked some of the fundamental doctrines of Perfectionism. Thus began a new controversy, in which many who opposed Noyes's leadership were split off from the Perfectionist church.

A call for a convention of Perfectionists at East Hamilton, New York, July 10, 1845, was published in *The Perfectionist*, and was signed by William S. Hatch, Charles Lovett, Joseph C. Ackley, Daniel P. Nash and Seymour W. Nash. Perfectionists from New

## Steps Toward a General Organization

England were specially invited to attend. Accordingly Noyes wrote to Cragin, who was in Northern Vermont, suggesting that he and Burnham attend the Convention. Cragin received Noyes's letter only five days before the Convention was to meet. He immediately turned over his team to Burnham, who was anxious to take counsel with Noyes at Putney, and traveled himself by stage to East Hamilton. There he met Noyes's brother George, whom Noyes had sent with a letter to the Convention.

GEORGE W. NOYES TO HARRIET H. SKINNER

Oneida Depot, Madison Co., New York,

July 15, 1845.

*Dear Sister:*

We are now at the house of William C. Gould, who is confined to his bed in consequence of breaking his leg . . .

The Convention commenced its sittings Thursday afternoon and continued them till Sunday afternoon. The number of brethren in attendance was not large. From abroad there were Charles Lovett and wife, Reuben Palmer of Brookfield, John B. Foot and wife of Clinton, Mrs. David A. Warren of Verona, John Abbott of Pulaski, Seymour Nash of Jefferson County, and J. Jefferies of Whitesboro Institute. Most of the time was occupied in testimony, exhortation and discussion by believers. The meeting on Sunday was held in a beautiful grove, and was principally addressed to unbelievers. . . .

I like the democracy among Perfectionists in this region better than I expected. They need however a chief in whom they can have common confidence and under whom they can act in unison. I think they are mostly prepared to admit this themselves.

You may have a curiosity to know more particularly about some who have gained renown in the past. William S. Hatch is firm in his faith, consistent in his morals, fervent in spirit,

## The Putney Community

rambling in his ideas, consequently eccentric. I cannot help loving him, and it is a treat to hear him speak on account of his originality and vehemence. He greatly needs New England coolness and discipline of mind, that he may have weight in society. John B. Foot is a clear-headed, conscientious man, but is under a spirit of legality which presses him down toward Methodism. Mrs. Foot is nearly with him. Jefferies is strong in the testimony of sanctification, but on other matters is wholly in the dark. In the religion of Mrs. David A. Warren I have but little confidence. She is a great talker, took a conspicuous part in the Convention, and tells of stupendous experiences, but she does not receive the security. . . .

I was interrupted in my writing last night by a call from Erasmus Stone and wife, who live next door to Mr. Gould. They stayed until eleven o'clock. He was polite and communicative, and stated frankly his objections to John's course, but did not attend the Convention.

We have visited none outside of Hamilton and Brookfield except Brother Gould. He appears sound and reasonable as ever.

Yours,

GEORGE W. NOYES.

GEORGE CRAGIN TO NOYES

Syracuse, New York, July 18, 1845.

*Dear Brother Noyes:* . . .

The communication addressed to the Convention by yourself was read by Brother Hatch. It was listened to with deep interest, and a motion that it be published in *The Perfectionist* was unanimously carried. . . .



## Steps Toward a General Organization

The Lord is manifestly preparing the way for a union between the east and the west. The only skirmish I have had was with John Abbott. He was drunk with the New York spirit. When we first met he said: "I am the representative of New York Perfectionists. You are the representative of New England Perfectionists." If he spoke the truth, New York Perfectionism is dead, for he soon fell under my spirit. At the meeting on the first day he did not open his head, and the next morning, after retracting some things he had said and inviting us to come and see him, he left the Convention . . .

These leading Perfectionists are not half so powerful as I expected to find them. . . . I keep my eye on a future harvest more than a present one. I know by the grace of God we shall be able to destroy their prejudice and compel them to love us, I was going to say against their will. Brother Hatch said during the meeting, "I love Brother Cragin more than I meant to;" and you know that they cannot help loving George.

Yours,

G. CRAGIN.

NOYES TO THE CONVENTION OF PERFECTIONISTS AT EAST  
HAMILTON, NEW YORK, JULY 10, 1845

*Dear Brethren:*

As I am prevented from meeting with you in person I will place at your disposal a contribution to the deliberations of the Convention in writing.

My attention has been turned of late to the symptoms of advancing conviction on the subject of holiness which are manifesting themselves in the churches, and I see much occasion for rejoicing and hope. . . . Charles G. Finney, the center of the revival spirit, was first affected and compelled to take an ad-

## The Putney Community

vanced position. He drew after him a large body of influential followers and a theological seminary. Now Dr. Beecher, the leader that stands next after Finney in spiritual power, has submitted partially to the truth; and he too draws after him a large body of influential followers and a theological seminary. . . .

I am well aware that Finney and Beecher have not come into line with us and with the Primitive Church on the high ground of the new covenant. Their advance is but half way; but my hope and expectation are that the work of conviction will go forward to conversion.

Let us now ask ourselves, brethren, what line of conduct is marked out for us. I will briefly give my judgment on this question. In the first place I think we ought to feel that the post assigned to us is that of the body-guard of the gospel. We must stand firm for perfect freedom from sin, for security, and for confession. These are the essentials of the new covenant. If we steadfastly abide by the gospel which proclaims these victories of faith, the masses that have begun to move will surely come to it at last.

In the next place we must purge our own ranks of semi-Perfectionism. I have seen many indications within the last year, that there is a class bearing the name of Perfectionists, claiming fellowship among us and even assuming to be inspired leaders and teachers, who exert their influence more or less openly and directly against justification, security and confession of salvation from sin. Such men have no right to a place among us. They are not with us in spirit, but with the half-converted masses that are moving toward us. Let us draw the line between them and us, that we may fully discharge our responsibilities as God's banner-guard in the coming conflict.

Finally it behooves us to take away all stumbling-blocks from the path of those who are approaching the gospel; to put away

## Steps Toward a General Organization

childish things; to frown on disorder, fanaticism and licentiousness; to give place among us as fast as possible to the order and discipline of the Primitive Church.

Your brother,

JOHN H. NOYES.

## Chapter 11

### NOYES'S CONFLICTS WITH HIS FATHER AND MOTHER

NOYES'S father spent the period 1815-1817 at Washington, D. C., as a member of the House of Representatives from Southern Vermont. These years fell within the brief interval when steamboats were in commercial use, but steam railroads not, and the journey from Brattleboro to Washington was longer, more difficult and more dangerous than the journey from Alaska today. The route via East Brattleboro, Hartford, New Haven, New York, Brunswick, Trenton, Philadelphia, Frenchtown and Baltimore required five separate trips by stage, and five by steamboat. Eleven days were spent upon the way. While passing through New Jersey the passengers were warned by the stage driver that their baggage might be stolen by highwaymen. Not finding a rope to pass through the handles of their trunks overhead and tie to their wrists, they appointed one of their number as watchman.

Philadelphia Mr. Noyes thought by far the most impressive and cultured city in America.

Washington was a dreary-looking place. The public buildings, which had been burned by the British the year before, were still in ruins. There were other fine buildings, but they were too few and scattered to produce any effect of grandeur. Avenues and streets were laid out on a magnificent scale, but as yet they passed through swamps and wilderness the greater part of their length. "On the whole however," he wrote, "I like this city, and it is easy to anticipate the time when it will be famed for its elegance and splendor."

#### EXTRACTS FROM MR. NOYES'S WASHINGTON LETTERS TO HIS WIFE

December 8, 1815.—Called on President Madison this day at twelve o'clock. Was received by a servant in waiting at the

## Noyes's Conflicts with His Father and Mother

door, and shown into a decent kind of room on the lower floor furnished with not very expensive cushion chairs only. Made my bow to the President, which was reciprocated. Was then introduced by Mr. Wheaton. Shook hands and took my seat. The President asked about the health of our families, of the people in Vermont, the state of the crops there, and the state of the roads between here and our homes. Ten or fifteen gentlemen called while I was there. The same kind of conversation passed with them. After about twenty minutes we made our bows and took our leave.

December 11, 1815.—As you have very justly said, we ought to be serious, and indeed I cannot but be so. But amidst the variety of objects and things which now surround me, perhaps I shall scarcely avoid writing you some particulars and incidents which may appear trifling and unimportant. You will excuse them. . . .

I have a great deal of time on my hands separate from my business in the House, which I am improving in reading books from the library, in writing to friends and acquaintances, in visiting among the members, and in resorting to every place here, where there is something new or curious to be seen. The style and manner of proceeding, the dignity which every member seems to feel, and the living at our quarters, all are very, very different from what we have in Vermont. A man cannot but feel animated, and as it were elevated.

I wish you were here. You would be more pleased than in any situation you ever were in. . . . After all, I shall be some homesick. I shall want to see you and the children. Wish I could come home and stay a few days by and by.

December 1815.—Upon the whole, a lady, if she can leave home, can spend a winter here as usefully and agreeably as at any place you ever saw. . . . We live full well enough for our health, and I fear too well. Our meat and poultry are of the



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first quality, and our bread, perhaps, the best in the world. Water pretty good. Brandy and wine very good and very dear. Plenty of oysters, apples, chestnuts. Notwithstanding all these fine things and a thousand kinds of amusements, which we may have if we will, I shall cast many a longing look for home before the recess of Congress.

December 19, 1815.—Today about two o'clock just before dinner Mrs. Madison and her sister, Judge Todd's wife, called at our house to see Ladies Sturgis and Strong. They are good hearty-looking women, about your height, a little more fleshy, conversed very well. She is said to be a very good woman, and is really federal in her principles. She came in a neat but not very costly carriage, with two white horses, each not superior to our white, a Negro postilion, and one standing behind on the carriage, neatly dressed for such sort of folks.

December 21, 1815.—While I was at dinner today, was partaking of the dessert, my plate full of pie, the apples and chestnuts handed round, and had just filled my glass with wine—that moment the penny post handed me your letter dated 15th inst. The pie, the apples, and the wine lost their charms. Home and fireside rushed upon my mind, and I seemed as it were transported to Brattleboro. Indeed the illusion has not yet left me, for while I am writing it seems that I am speaking to you in our parlor. . . .

December 25, 1815.—Since meeting have strolled about the city, sometimes with one and another, almost in the same manner as some would do in order to kill time. Indeed I hardly know what else I can do; for after reading, writing, and thinking enough to produce satiety, it seems necessary to have something else. Of course we take a walk somewhere, and with scarcely any object in view than to see such things as may be in our way, and to meet possibly some new faces. Governor Tickenor called on us at twelve o'clock. Soon after in came

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Mrs. Dexter and her two daughters to see Mrs. Sturgis, all of us in our elegant keeping room. The ladies, as is the custom, said a great many things in a short time, and took their leave. Thus we pass away time; but all of it is not equal to home. Some things indeed are very agreeable for the moment, that is, they would gratify some folks, or at least some folks would seem to be pleased, but you know my turn of mind as to these things.

I occupy a large, elegant chamber fronting on Pennsylvania Avenue, where the President's and a hundred other carriages are continually passing. You would be delighted—perhaps—to see the bustle, the show and parade of great folks. I wish you were here. It would suit Mary and Joanna to the life to be here. But tell them from me, that they ought to accomplish themselves well in all those kinds of things properly called domestic before they can expect to go abroad much. The time will come when, if I live, I shall be pleased to give them as good opportunities for seeing the world, and becoming acquainted with good things and good folks as perhaps they ought to desire. Tell Elizabeth and John and George how much I shall love them if they conduct well.

December 30, 1815.—Joanna wishes to know whether I have bought me a pair of breeches, or in more fashionable phrase, small clothes. I have not, though they say I ought to have some. Mr. President Madison has a grand Levee New Year's Day; this is the only Levee kept by him. If I am well, I expect to attend, and make it do with my pantaloons. It is unfashionable to wear boots at Mrs. Madison's Levees, (which are attended every Wednesday evening by everybody that has a mind to go), because boots may soil their muslins. Therefore, if we have not small clothes and silk stockings, we must wear pantaloons tied down to our shoes or over our boots. This is all nonsense and trifling, and I fear some of my letters will be considered

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trifling. When we write so much as I do we must be excused if it should not all be the very best of sense.

Monday, two o'clock.—Have just returned from the President's Levee. Had a merry time of it; plenty of the best of wine, punch, and such good cakes as your best. A Levee is held in the drawing room, and means that the company are all on a level and at perfect ease. It was attended from eleven to two o'clock, and in the course of that time probably four hundred persons appeared, made their bows and curtesies to Mr. and Mrs. Madison, gave the compliments of the season, mixed with the crowd, recreated themselves at the sideboard, and retired. The company could not but be good-natured and sociable.

April 6, 1816 (in the House).—We have had for two or three months past a more laborious session than any since the Government began. We go into the House between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, and there continue in great exertion and even agitation of mind till five and six o'clock, without drinking anything but water, or eating anything at all unless we buy a piece of cake or an apple of one of the old women in the lobby, for which we pay more than would purchase dinner even in Boston. After all this fatigue we return to our quarters almost totally exhausted in body and mind; and if we are not beyond eating, we eat like dogs whatever is set before us. Thus you may easily see, that we are scarcely fit for any exertion till another day comes round. In fact, it is a dog's life and worse.

Mrs. Polly Noyes regretted later that she did not accompany her husband to Washington and make a home for him. She felt that, had she done so, he might have been spared the painful episode that marred an otherwise happy and distinguished career. As it was, he acquired while in Washington a taste for drink. For twenty years after his return to Vermont he was only a moderate drinker, able to attend to his affairs and maintain his respectability before the world. But the habit, though slow, was insidious

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and apparently irremediable. At last in 1837 his condition became desperate. "He would shut himself in his room after the rest of the family were asleep," writes Noyes in his biography of his father, "and more than once after hearing a fall I have found him helpless on the floor."

### PETITION OF THE JUNIOR MEMBERS OF THE NOYES FAMILY TO THEIR FATHER <sup>1</sup>

Putney, March 9, 1837.

*Dear Father:*

We think it our duty as members of your household and family to present you a respectful expression of our united desires, and we see no way to secure the object of our petition without using great plainness of speech. We therefore frankly declare that our object is to persuade you to redeem yourself from ruin, and release us from the slavery of solicitude concerning you by wholly abandoning the use of ardent spirits. That we have good reason for this effort you will not deny if you recall several memorable scenes of the past winter. We are all compelled, however reluctantly, to regard you as a man slowly but surely sinking in the mire of intemperance, and we are sure the melancholy truth cannot long be concealed from the world. Our only hope, that you will escape the public disgrace of drunkenness and we the mortification of a drunkard's family, rests on the success of this last effort for your reformation. . . .

The beguiling and enslaving power of habit has long been exhibited before our eyes. You have often apparently been checked in your descent, and you have as often resumed your course with increased momentum and decreased self-control. We see you now in the harvest of your days, a time which should be honorable to yourself and honored by us, daily and almost hourly indulging a degrading appetite, and manifesting

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in Noyes's handwriting.—G. W. N.



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your own sense of its degradation by vainly attempting to conceal it. We see the marks of your slavery in your countenance, in your gait, in your speech. We recognize the same evil in the unreasonable temper which you manifest at times, and we sadly contrast it with the kindness and consistency of your former behavior. We see and attribute to the same cause a rapid loss of intellect and health. We reasonably fear the loss of your property and life by fire or other casualties incidental to intoxication. We can by no means feel that confidence in you as a counsellor and guide of the family, which your former character was wont to inspire. We can have no faith in your religious character, knowing that "no drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God." For all these reasons we can have no pleasure in your society, neither can you in ours.

What then can we do but exercise the right of petition? What ought we to do, as children dealing with a beloved father, but beseech you for your own sake, for our sake, for God's sake to renounce wholly and forever the use of intoxicating liquors?

We will wait on the Lord with submission and patience, whatever may be the result, knowing that the God of the widow and the fatherless will befriend us if this our united and last effort fails, and giving praise and thanksgiving to him who alone can change the heart if it succeeds.

HARRIET H. NOYES	J. H. NOYES
GEORGE W. NOYES	M. I. MEAD
CHARLOTTE A. NOYES	JOANNA HAYES
	HORATIO S. NOYES

We respectfully ask an answer in writing.

Mr. Noyes had already become in theory a Perfectionist under the influence of his son John. This appeal of his children now enabled him despite his advanced age to break the chains of habit. Thus a life that was drawing to a close in misery and disgrace



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was permitted to end in harmony with its early ideals. He died October 26, 1841, at the age of seventy-seven years.

### NOTES BY MRS. POLLY NOYES

January 21, 1841.—Yesterday falling under severe rebuke from John on account of some unguarded and foolish speeches, I found myself, when I went to bed, in a state of tumult. I soon perceived I might have a sleepless night, and prepared myself for it. As I knew how liable I was to come under doubts about John, I endeavored for some time to ward them off by repeating constantly in my mind "God is with us in John." This faith had been victorious the night before, but now it was overcome by a cloud that fell on me; and after a short debate I was enveloped in it all night. I came to the conclusion that I should die shortly, and that I could not die in peace without telling John plainly that he had faults and infirmities as well as others, although I acknowledged him as my leader and gave up my judgment to him. He soon convinced me that my feelings were under the delusion of Satan; advised me to pray much to be delivered from this accusing spirit and a licentious tongue; he was answerable in these things to God alone, his maker and employer. He said my justification was in him; if I destroyed him I destroyed myself. Oh, may I pray and be heard, watch and pray that I may be found faithful in all things!

### HARRIET A. NOYES'S JOURNAL

August 29, 1842.—Harriet and Charlotte called. Harriet related some new ideas her mother entertained with regard to the impracticability of living in a corporate community. John told them they need not listen to her suggestions, but separate themselves from her. They were to reject every teacher who taught doctrines contrary to those he taught.

August 30, 1842.—Mrs. Polly Noyes and Harriet came to

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talk with John. Mrs. Noyes contradicted and resisted John, as she has before a great many times. She stayed all night, and held out against his sternest reproofs and threatenings until noon of the 31st, when she gave up and the Devil departed. She then got John to write a confession for her that Satan had filled her mind.

NOTE BY MRS. POLLY NOYES

December 7, 1844.—Humbled, and I hope taught. Thankful, but much mystery in the progress of liberty of the Corporation. Oh, may I yet see the glory of God by faith, which I now act upon!

PRIDE OF MOTHERHOOD

PAPER BY NOYES PROBABLY LATE IN 1845

Mother's self-esteem stands sentinel over all her other faults. It is that which makes her disputatious and impervious to severe truth. It is that which frustrates all her professions of submission to me. It is that which gives her boldness to judge and find fault with things which she understands not, and to dogmatize and domineer in the Corporation. In a word self-esteem is the key of her character, and she will never be redeemed till all her haughtiness is brought low by a permanent spiritual pressure which shall make her humble enough to confess that her own character is the worst thing she has to complain of.

Her self-esteem acts predominantly in conjunction with her philoprogenitiveness. She thinks herself wiser than all around her in the management of children, and entitled to interfere and dictate in the concerns of our families. In fact she maintains the motherly position toward all the parents in the Corporation as well as the children; toward myself among the rest, and of course is in no condition to receive my instructions as a child. She is an overseer instead of a scholar.

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Her pride of motherhood (as I may call the combination of self-esteem with philoprogenitiveness) feeds and protects itself by constant recurrence to her advantage over us in respect to experience in the management of children. The ultimate stronghold of that pride in the central secrecy of her heart is an assumption (which has nearly the strength of consciousness, though it is false) that she has been unusually successful in the management of her family; in fact that the credit of my character and position as a servant of God, and of all that is good in the rest of the family is due to her. This assumption partially discloses itself from time to time in self-complacent appeals to the history and condition of her children, and in her frequent reference to that prayer by which she dedicated me to "the ministry of the everlasting gospel." On the strength of this assumption she feels authorized to despise and oppose the views of education which we are deriving from the gospel, and to thrust upon us her own system.

It is necessary that this delusion, which hinders her from becoming a child and which embarrasses all our operations, should be removed. I shall proceed therefore to expose in the light of eternity the real character and results of her maternal administration. If she is not in condition to appreciate what I am about to say, let her children and all others concerned lay it to heart and press it on her spirit until God shall give her repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

In the first place I admit that in a physical sense she has had an important agency in raising up the family to which God has committed the gospel. She has been a link in the chain of our generation. But Father shares the credit of this with her, as well as all our other progenitors since Adam.

Secondly I admit that she in conjunction with Father has made good provision for the temporal comfort and respectability of the family. But in this respect far more credit is due to

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Father than to her. With immortality in view we cannot account such provision by itself as intrinsically valuable. It is at most only a relative and temporary good. It is as often a snare as a blessing. The credit due for it is only such as may be given to the wise men of this world whose end is destruction.

With these general concessions I come now to examine the special religious agency which Mother has had in our education, and on which alone she can pretend to value herself.

The leading fact to be considered is that, devout as she may have been herself in entering upon the responsibilities of motherhood, she connected herself with an ungodly man, and so gave up one-half at least of the education of her children to the prince of this world. If she taught us to fear God, the partner she took taught us by example and precept to worship money and live for this world.

What are the results of the complex education for which Mother became responsible by her marriage? Taking as the tests the three oldest girls, who were never in my hands, and Horatio, who escaped from me, the facts are these: Mary married a Unitarian lawyer, Elizabeth an infidel physician, Joanna an irreligious West India merchant, and Horatio is the cashier of a bank, a Unitarian worldling. What is there in these results for a religious mother to be proud of? Is it not manifest that the worldly force prevailed and delivered these children to Satan? By her own example she taught her daughters to sell themselves to worldlings. The injunction to marry "only in the Lord," and the conservatism of the patriarchs could have no firm footing in her family, for her own marriage was a violation of it. Where is the probability of a "godly seed" in the second generation?

The younger portion of the family is not to be brought into this account. I have saved them from the world by disregarding



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Mother's advice and by teaching them to maintain their independence of her.

But Mother may say that I am what I am in consequence of her administration, and that what I have done for the younger members of the family is ultimately to be credited to her. But this is a delusion. At my birth she prayed that I might be a "minister of the everlasting gospel." What did she mean by this? Nothing more than that I might be such a minister as the specimens around her, a minister of the worldly church, which stands foremost in opposition to the everlasting gospel and from which we have come out. What is the real office of such a minister? Simply to keep enough religious influence at work in the community to make men comfortable in the service of Mammon. I would as willingly be a Unitarian lawyer, an infidel doctor, a nothingarian merchant, or a free-and-easy cashier. All that makes me different from the Rev. Mr. Foster is to be credited not to Mother but to the grace of God working beyond her and in spite of her.

It is nevertheless to be admitted that there was a degree of reality in her religion, and that her influence had a valuable agency in preparing us for the education of God. I will allow that her educational system has been to that in which we stand as Judaism to Christianity. Judaism, though it was in one sense the mother of Christianity, did not create Christianity and could claim no control over it. And Judaism was not valuable in itself, but only as an antecedent of Christianity. In the destruction of Jerusalem with its attending horrors we see the end and the actual value of that part of Judaism which set up for itself and would not merge itself in the Christian dispensation. So the education which we received from Mother, if it had terminated in itself, would have only ripened us for destruction. It is valuable only as a preparation for the education



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of God. If then she has opposed the system which has succeeded her own, she has done what she could to render all that she has done for us worthless. Now I aver before heaven and earth that she has resisted me constantly and at every important step in my career since I became in truth a "minister of the everlasting gospel." She resisted me when I first proposed to her the gospel. She resisted me when I first preached the gospel in this village. She resisted me long and obstinately in reference to my claim of spiritual rule over her and her children. Many times I have found no way to lead on the children without requiring them to renounce her authority and make war on her. She has repeatedly withdrawn herself from me, and once at least made overtures of alliance to David Crawford and the church. She was in a state of rebellion against me when I married Harriet and commenced permanent operations in this place. If her will had been done, I should have suppressed every strong feature of the gospel and remained in submission to the church; I should have avoided all the innovations which have given us our independent position and are leading us on to the "new heavens and the new earth;" the children would have been educated by the world and for the world, and our spiritual capital would have been utterly sunk and drowned in alliances with our relatives and with worldly society. Where then is her glorying? Her mouth shall be stopped. She shall not dictate as a mother over us.

I have written these severe truths not in cruelty but in love. My intention is to reduce her self-conceit, that she may be saved. The day has come when "all the haughtiness of man shall be brought low and the Lord alone exalted."

JOHN H. NOYES.

Noyes's mother had one more period of stout opposition. It was in the midst of the crisis at Putney in December 1847, when she attempted to turn back the forces of social revolution. She was

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however soon reconverted, and joined the Community at Oneida in May 1849.

During the remainder of her life, though she always had a mind of her own, she was a loyal and helpful member. Her husband was gone and her children grown, but she had with her under the same roof sons, daughters, grandchildren and two hundred and fifty fellow-communists. Singing hymns and reciting Bible texts aloud when unable to sleep at night, whittling miniature totems in her room when time hung heavily, corresponding with gentle-spirited friends, penning endless illegible reminiscences and reflections to the despair of her biographers, she was "contented and happy" until her death in 1866 at the age of eighty-six years.



## Chapter 12

### MUTUAL CRITICISM

PAMPHLET PUBLISHED BY THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY IN 1876

THE little school at Putney went through a long discipleship before the system of mutual criticism was instituted. The process was perfectly natural. Love for the truth and for one another had been nurtured and strengthened till it could bear any strain. We could receive criticism kindly and give it without fear of offending. Association had ripened acquaintance so that we knew one another's faults. We had studied the Bible systematically for ten years, and were trying to express our conclusions in appropriate external forms.

The year 1846 was known among us as the year of revival. There was a spring-like awakening of the affections and a baptism of unity that were new and supernatural. They were the precursors, as it proved, of the spirit of judgment. This spirit was invited by our new ordinance of criticism. In one of our evening meetings Mr. Noyes spoke of the possible rending of the veil between us and the Primitive Church. Were we prepared to make music with this glorious company? Our hearts might be in tune, but in outward expression we were unpractised. There was however one chord of sympathy between us and them in which we could make music even now, the spirit of improvement. That spirit animated all heaven, and would put us in sympathy with every good being in the universe. With this for a beginning we must increase our points

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of harmony and make ourselves attractive by all the refinement of which we were capable. As one measure he proposed mutual criticism. The plan was received with enthusiasm, and one of our most earnest members offered himself immediately as the subject of the first experiment. The others engaged to study his character, and at the next meeting tell their whole mind "without partiality and without hypocrisy," "in naught extenuate nor set down aught in malice," but hold up to him as perfect a mirror as possible.

When the affair transpired we were not prepared for its solemnity. If some of us were sportively disposed in the beginning, we were serious enough before the surgery was over. There was a spirit in our midst that was like the word of God, "quick and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." All that winter we felt that we were in the day of judgment. Criticism had free course and it was like fire in the stubble of our faults. It was painful in its first application, but happy in its results. One brother says, that while he was undergoing the process he felt as though he were being dissected with a knife, but when it was over he said to himself: "These things are all true, but they are gone, they are washed away."

### HOW TO GIVE CRITICISM

As oxygen combined with nitrogen is the very breath of life while pure oxygen is destructive, so criticism must be combined with love to be wholesome and healing. Christ was qualified to be the judge of this world by the love he showed in laying down his life for it. Criticism bathed in love wounds but to heal; bathed in personal feelings it leaves poison in the wound.

There must be not only love but respect. Whatever a person's faults, Christ is in him if he is a believer, and there is a sense in which it may be said: "Who shall lay anything to the charge

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of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Criticism should carry no savor of condemnation. There should be discrimination between a person's superficial character and his heart where Christ is. The object of criticism is only to destroy the husk which conceals his inward goodness.

A third qualification is sincerity, which comes right to the point and tells the plain truth without fear of offending. Sometimes a person carefully mixes so much praise and extenuation with his censure as not seriously to disturb self-complacency. This is ineffectual.

Patience and meekness are important qualifications. Meekness is the spirit in which we wish persons to receive criticism, and we must give it in the same spirit. Pride provokes self-justification; censoriousness provokes retaliation; combativeness provokes resistance.

Love, patience and meekness do not exclude a just indignation against wrong. Vehemence and godly anger are often necessary to give execution to the shaft of criticism. Paul instructs Titus to rebuke the obtuseness of the Cretans "sharply."

Wisdom as to procedure is essential. In some cases private criticism is preferable, in others open rebuke before all. In general it is best to wait until criticism is cordially invited. Constant chafing against a person's faults is unprofitable. We should not criticise under the compulsion of personal annoyance; the true motive is to edify the body of Christ. In the case of a person who lacks ambition for improvement it may be good to say the worst that can be said with truth, so that he will if possible hate himself. But when a person is eager to improve, he does not much need to be told his shortcomings. Your best way to help him is to show him the very thing that he can do now to improve.

The feeling is natural that it would be hypocrisy to criti-



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cise an evil in others unless we are free from it ourselves. This is wrong. If we are troubled with a particular fault, that may be a reason for showing it no favor in others. Let giver and receiver look simply at the evil under criticism and demolish it.

It is plain that, if I have a mote in my eye and you have one in yours, I can see to get yours out better than I can to get out my own. Each can help the other. But to have a beam in my eye is another thing. If I have something in my eye that stops my sight altogether, I must first pull that out before I can see to cast the mote out of your eye. When one is blind he should not criticise.

Our hearts should be tender and genial toward those we criticise. We should always remember that the purpose of criticism is not to unload grudges, but to bring the person criticised nearer to God and give him a new happiness.

### HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM

The difference between a right and a wrong spirit in receiving criticism is the difference between manliness and childishness. A childish spirit frustrates the operation of truth in two ways. In one form it meets criticism with indifference; hears and forgets; is not pricked to the heart and stirred to action. In another form it is too sensitive, too anxious for results; it either becomes discouraged or rushes into ineffectual action; its eye is on escape from suffering rather than on improvement. A manly spirit not only takes pleasure in the accomplishment of a good change in himself, but in the process by which it is brought about. He not only likes the meat, but likes to crack the nut.

Submitting effectually to criticism is like threading a needle. You cannot do it if your eyes are full of tears nor if you are

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all in a bustle. You can do it only by being coolly and quietly in earnest.

Some temperamental qualities must be repressed and others aroused, if criticism is to be profitably received. Large self-esteem makes a person resist criticism as a false charge. Large hope may be compared to soil that is too rich; its productions shoot up rapidly, but they are not strong-rooted and hardy. Small self-esteem and small hope make a soil that is too damp and wants the sun. As the best soil is deep, sunny, receptive to dew and rain, so a spirit that is constantly replenished by the quickening elements of patience, conscientiousness and enthusiasm for improvement is the best for criticism.

We may stand and take criticism as the fire of an enemy, and so feel wounded; or we may join those that fire at us, in which case we shall feel unhurt. If we are members of Christ, criticism does not touch the real *I*. It takes effect on the external character, and that we can bear to have washed as we do our clothes. The secret of going through the judgment comfortably is to help judge ourselves.

A determined purpose of improvement will nourish itself for years to accomplish a desired change. The Bible speaks of men who "lie in wait to deceive." We must lie in wait to improve. Look at the cat lying in wait for the mouse. Not a muscle stirs, but her eyes are shining with a keen flame. The flame shows her purpose, the stillness her patience. Nothing pleases God more than to see us lie in wait for improvement with a bright eye and without flurry.

If we should suggest to a group of children the building of a house, some would begin to hurry around, thinking they could easily do it in a short time. Others would think the job so hopeless they would refuse to try. But an experienced, determined man would lay his plans, gather his materials, and press forward with an unwavering purpose, knowing that it

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would take years to finish. The great works of architecture and engineering may justly inspire our reverence as exponents of purpose stretching through years. We must learn from them to form immortal, self-sustaining purposes of personal improvement. We shall then appreciate the criticism that helps us toward our end.

### EXAMPLES OF CRITICISM <sup>1</sup>

#### CRITICISM OF MR. B.

Critic No. 1.—Mr. B.'s earnestness and strength of character make him a valuable member of society, but he needs cultivation and refinement.

Critic No. 2.—Mr. B. has all the solid qualities, firmness, uprightness and sincerity. He intends to deal justly with every one.

Critic No. 3.—He is warm-hearted, and a man of tender, delicate sensibilities. He is governed by the spirit of truth more than most men. But his mind and manners do not fairly represent his heart.

Critic No. 4.—He is an unselfish man, free from envy and jealousy. He needs outward refinement. The inward beauty of his character is working out, and will eventually overcome all external defects.

Critic No. 5.—He is a philosopher, a man who thinks and reasons deeply, but he lacks simplicity in the expression of his thoughts.

Critic No. 6.—The interior of his character is excellent, but the exterior is faulty. In order to do him the good we wish by this exercise a severe criticism ought to be leveled at his external faults. Criticism of the external character should not be

<sup>1</sup> The Community was not in the practice of reporting criticisms until after the migration to Oneida. These examples are drawn from shorthand reports made during the Oneida epoch.—G. W. N.

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neglected because the internal is good. Instead of being contented with inward beauty, he should aim to have also an outward manifestation of it. His utterance is labored, tedious and awkward. He has in him the soul of music but he is no singer. Again, in his business character he has perfect honesty, but there is a lack of science and tact, which has brought him into many difficulties.

Critic No. 1.—He has large hope, and often promises more than he fulfills; disappoints folks. His financial accounts are always at loose ends. He needs to carry his conscientiousness into business.

Critic No. 7.—He is what I should call an outline character. He makes excellent plans, but is careless in executing details.

Critic No. 8.—He is not as neat in his personal habits as good taste requires. He should pay more attention to outward adornment.

Critic No. 6.—Every member of our personality has its rights. Because the external senses are subordinate in the body politic, are they to be trampled under foot? Let us carry out the principle of democracy, and give to all our different faculties, even those most inferior, a wise and generous attention.

### CRITICISM OF MR. A.

Critic No. 1.—Mr. A. is impetuous and positive in his manner, and is deficient in persuasiveness. He takes a position that you are not prepared for, and announces it without any circumlocution whatever, and, though you are not sure but that he is correct, you naturally resist being jerked into the admission of it. He has a kind of honesty that strips everything of romance, and this is apt to revolt you. He might have the same independence and honesty with more tact.

Critic No. 2.—The prevailing trait in Mr. A.'s character, amounting almost to idiosyncrasy, is directness. He is direct



## Mutual Criticism

in everything he does—in his religious pursuits, his thought, his speech and his actions. This is in general a good quality, giving intensity, singleness of eye, and consequent success. But in our social intercourse this trait needs some modification. It will not do in conversation to drive straight at a topic and think of nothing else. There are many side-considerations growing out of our personal relations and the demands of social harmony. Mr. A.'s excessive directness sometimes causes him to forget everything but his subject, and leads him into unnecessary discord.

Critic No. 3.—Mr. A. should make it more of an object to think and speak harmoniously with others. Suppose that he forms an opinion which he wants to express, but has reason to think that it will not fall pleasantly into C.'s mind. In such a case true consideration requires not that he should suppress his opinion, or that he should agree with C., but that he should broach his opinion moderately, make some stairs for C. to descend on and not drop him right down with a jolt. All our speech should have the most delicate reference to harmony. With a quick ear for harmony and a heart that values it as God does Mr. A. might be just as independent as he is now and yet always find a way to express himself musically.

### CRITICISM OF MISS E.

E. is remarkably outspoken and impulsive; consequently her faults are decided and well known. She is a fine specimen of the vital temperament, has great exuberance of animal spirits, would live on laughing and frolic, is ardent in her affections and lively in her antipathies. In the circumstances of ordinary life she would not have been corrected of her faults; simply parental authority would not have been sufficient. She would have ruled all around her, and henpecked her husband to the



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last degree. But the Community is too much for her, especially as she is wise enough to give herself up to its criticism.

The elderly people criticise her for disrespect and inattention. She will fly through a room perhaps on some impulsive errand of generosity, leave both doors open and half knock down anybody in her way.

Her laughing propensity was criticised. Some thought she could dispense with half her usual indulgence, while one recommended as a compromise, that she should cease laughing at others' calamities.

She has a touch of vanity; likes to look in the glass, and plumes herself on her power of charming.

She indulges in unfounded antipathies and whims of taste, while she is likely to be carried out of bounds by her attractions.

Her wonderful exuberance of life, gayety and impetuosity are her gift, the inheritance of her youth and constitution, and no one would have these qualities changed. Like many another good passion these would be bad if allowed to act under the influence of selfishness, but of themselves they are much to be prized in society.

Though E. is zealous, industrious and useful, we should miss her more for what she is than for what she does. We must cure her of her coarseness, and teach her to be gay without being rude, respectful without being dull.

### CRITICISM OF MR. R.

Mr. R. is honest and has a sincere ambition to be a right kind of character. He is faithful in work, unselfish in the disposition of his time and muscles. He is not a fault-finder nor pleasure-seeker. The Community has perfect confidence in his central union with Christ. Yet he is in difficulty; he does not find himself in the current of inspiration.

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The trouble is that he lacks the balance of character which a sound mind gives. He is narrow-minded, illogical and mystical. He has a tendency to fanaticism and alternations of high and low spirits. He has lived without a proper appreciation of the cultivation of the intellect, thinking that it had nothing to do with his spiritual character. In the absence of other subjects of interest his own individual experience occupies all his thoughts.

He has a strong desire for the society of his superiors, and has battled with impediments for a long time but not in the right way. His method has only condensed his egotism and removed him farther from his object. We must go out of ourselves to find fellowship. We must meet in the medium of a third element toward which each is attracted. In communication with some you feel that their egotism would compel you into unwilling sympathy, and it is as natural as breathing to avoid them. No one can make his own experience interesting except as an exposition of general truth. Every new truth we learn is a new point of contact with other persons, and increases our power of giving and receiving happiness.

If Mr. R. would entirely forget himself, and apply his mind with perseverance for a long season to some study, he would become a better judge of his own experience, and would find himself in the very element of social freedom.

### CRITICISM OF MISS M.

Mrs. C.: Miss M. is refined, and has a warm, loving heart. When she first came here, she had some ideas of women's rights which she will learn to be false.

Mrs. N.: I admire her gift of speech. But I think it is sometimes an injury to her; when in trial she talks at random.

Mr. S.: She has a strong intellect, and comprehends the

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deepest truths. Her superiority to the world in this respect has made her egotistical. She acts up to the truth she has received.

Noyes: The greater part of the time I have been much pleased with Miss M. But there have been periods when a kind of evil possession which was distressing to me seemed to get the upper hand. She has presented two sets of characteristics, one of which she received from God and the other from the world. She had the qualifications of a splendid woman. But she was kept out of the place to which her natural gifts and refinement might have elevated her, and was held down and crushed by the machinery of worldly society. She might have ranked with the most honorable women, but the world received her only as a sempstress. She resisted her fate. We found her just in time to save her from self-destruction, and we will see what we can do for one whom the world has undone.

There are some things in her character which I particularly admire. First, she has an unusually pure mind. In spite of education she has preserved a taste that is simple, natural and unperverted. Another thing I like is her freedom of conversation. She is able to speak on any subject at any time and yet modestly. I consider her on this account a valuable addition to our Community. We have done a great deal to banish bashfulness, but it may yet be said that the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. I would be glad if our women would avail themselves of her skill in the art of conversation.

I have discovered in her a slight tendency to be disputatious. In the world, I know, the chief fun of conversation consists in resisting one another with the desire to beat, and dispute is almost considered essential to freedom. But in conversation, as in everything else, liberty is best secured by keeping the unity of the spirit. I believe that even these amicable games which are played among us will finally become distasteful, and

## Mutual Criticism

that the excitement of combativeness will not enter into our social pleasures at all.

A MEMBER'S RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS FIRST CRITICISM

CITED BY ALLAN ESTLAKE IN HIS BOOK *The Oneida Community* PP. 66-7

Here was I who had been doing my utmost to lead a right kind of life; had been a laborer in churches, in religious meetings, in Sunday and Ragged Schools; had always stood ready to empty my pockets to the needy, and more than anybody else had been instrumental in improving the New York Young Men's Christian Association—I, who for months had been shaping my conduct and ideas into form, as I thought, to match the requirements of the Oneida Community. Yet I was shaken from center to circumference. Every trait of my character that I took any pride or comfort in seemed to be cruelly discounted. And after, as it were, being turned inside out and thoroughly inspected, I was metaphorically stood upon my head and allowed to drain till all the self-righteousness had dripped out of me. John H. Noyes wound up the criticism, and said many kind things. I don't know what they were. Perhaps it was only the way in which he said them. Perhaps it was only his personal magnetism, or the magnetism of the spirit which he represented. But there was not a word or a thought of retort left in me. I felt like pouring out my soul in tears, but there was too much pride left in me yet to make an exhibition of myself. The work had only been begun. For days and weeks afterward I found myself recalling various passages of my criticism and reviewing them in a new light. The more I pondered, the more convinced I became of the justice of what at first my spirit had so violently rebelled against. In my subsequent experience with criticism I have

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invariably found, that in points wherein I thought myself the most abused I have on more mature reflection found the deepest truth. (Today I feel that I would gladly give many years of my life if I could have just one more criticism from John H. Noyes.)



## Chapter 13

### MALE CONTINENCE

**P**HYIOLOGICALLY the Oneida Community owed its existence to a method of birth control called by Noyes Male Continence.

#### ABSTRACTS FROM PAMPHLETS BY NOYES 1849 AND 1872

I was married in 1838, and lived in the usual routine of matrimony until 1846. It was during this period of eight years that I studied the subject of sexual communion, and discovered the principle of Male Continence. The discovery was occasioned and even forced upon me by sorrow. Within six years my wife went through the agonies of five births. Four were premature. Only one child lived. After our last disappointment I pledged my word to my wife that I would never again expose her to such fruitless suffering. I made up my mind to live apart rather than break this promise. This was in the summer of 1844. At that time the solution came to me as an inspiration, that the social function could be separated from the procreative. I found that the self-control required was not difficult. This was a great deliverance. We had escaped the horrors and the fear of involuntary propagation, and our married life was happy as never before. During the next two years I studied all the bearings of the discovery. In 1846 we commenced Complex Marriage at Putney, and in 1849, soon after our removal to Oneida, I published the new theory in a pamphlet.

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So long as the amative and propagative functions are confounded sexual communion carries with it physical consequences that take it out of the category of purely social acts. If a man under the cover of a social call upon a woman should leave a child for her to care for, he would do a mean wrong. But the man who under the cover of sexual communion commits the propagative act leaves his child in a meaner and more oppressive way. It is not to be wondered that women often look upon sexual communion as a stab at their life. But let the act of fellowship stand by itself and sexual communion differs only by its superior intensity and beauty from other acts of love. The self-control, retention of life and ascent out of sensuality that must result from making freedom of love a bounty on the chastening of physical indulgence will elevate the race to new vigor and nobility.

Male Continence not only relieves us of undesirable propagation but opens the way for scientific propagation. We are not opposed to procreation. But we are opposed to involuntary procreation. We are opposed to excessive and, of course, oppressive procreation, which is almost universal. We are opposed to random procreation, which is unavoidable in the marriage system. But we are in favor of intelligent, well-ordered procreation. The time will come when scientific combination will be freely and successfully applied to human generation.

The common objection to Male Continence is that it is unnatural and unauthorized by the example of the lower animals. But cooking, wearing clothes, living in houses are unnatural in the same sense. In a higher sense I believe it is natural for rational beings by invention and discovery to improve nature. Until men and women by moral culture elevate their sexual life above that of the brutes they are living in unnatural degradation.

The real meaning of this objection is that Male Continence

## **Hale Continenence**

is an interruption of a natural act. But every instance of self-denial is an interruption of some natural act. The man who contents himself with a look at a beautiful woman, the lover who stops at a kiss are conscious of such an interruption. Must there be no halt in this natural progression? Brutes, animal or human, tolerate none. Shall their ideas of self-control prevail? Nay, it is the glory of man to control himself, and the Kingdom of God summons him to self-control in all things.

## Chapter 14

### BIBLE COMMUNISM

PAMPHLET BY NOYES PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 1849

1. The Bible predicts that the Kingdom of God will come on earth. Dan. 2:44, Isa. 25:6-9.

2. The administration of the will of God in his kingdom on earth will be the same as the administration of his will in heaven. Matt. 6:10, Eph. 1:10.

3. God's plan at the beginning of the Christian era was not to establish immediately his kingdom on earth, but to march an isolated church through the world, establish the kingdom in the heavens, and prepare the way for the kingdom on earth by giving the Gentiles the Bible and religious training. Hence the Apostolic Church was directed to submit to "the powers that be." But at the end of the "times of the Gentiles" God will call his church to break in pieces the powers that be and take their place.

4. The institutions of the Kingdom of God are such that a disclosure of them in the apostolic age would have been inconsistent with God's plan of continuing the institutions of this world through the times of the Gentiles. Hence the Bible must not be asked to lead us into the institutions of the Kingdom of God step by step, but only to point the way, consigning us to the specific guidance of "the spirit of wisdom and revelation."

5. In the Kingdom of God marriage does not exist. On the

## Bible Communism

other hand there is no proof in the Bible nor in reason that the distinction of sex will ever be abolished. Matt. 22:29-30.

6. In the Kingdom of God the intimate union that in the world is limited to the married pair extends through the whole body of communicants; without however excluding special companionships founded on special adaptability. John 17:21.

7. The situation on the day of Pentecost shows the practical tendency of heavenly influences. "All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need."

Communism on the day of Pentecost extended only to goods, it is true. But the same spirit that abolished property in goods would, if allowed full scope, abolish property in persons. Paul expressly places property in goods and property in persons in the same category, and speaks of them together as ready to be abolished by the Kingdom of God.

The Communism of the day of Pentecost is not to be regarded as temporary and circumstantial. The seed of heavenly unity fell into the earth and was buried for a time, but in the harvest at the second coming of Christ it was reproduced and became the universal, eternal principle of the invisible church.

8. The abolishment of appropriation is involved in the very nature of a true relation to Christ. Appropriation is a branch of egotism. But the grand mystery of the gospel is vital union with Christ, which is the extinguishment of egotism at the center.

9. The abolishment of worldly restrictions on sexual union is involved in the anti-legality of the gospel. It is incompatible with the perfected freedom, toward which Paul's gospel of "grace without law" leads, that a person should be allowed to love in all directions, and yet be forbidden to express love except in one direction.



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10. The abolishment of marriage is involved in Paul's doctrine of the end of ordinances. Marriage is a worldly ordinance. Christians are dead to the world by the death of Christ. The same reasoning which authorized the abolishment of the Jewish ordinances makes also an end of marriage.

11. The abolishment of the Jewish ordinances was the "offense of the cross" in the apostolic age. It brought the church into collision with the civil as well as the ecclesiastical authorities, compelled Christians to die substantially to the world at the outset, and exposed them to constant persecution and the hazard of literal death. If Christ and the unbelieving world are as hostile to each other now as ever (which is certainly true), the cross of Christ must have a development today as offensive to the Gentiles as the nullification of the Sinai law was to the Jews. Where then shall the death-blow of the flesh fall in the Gentile world? We answer, on marriage. That is a civil as well as religious ordinance, common to all Christian sects. The nullification of marriage in the modern world will be just such an offense of the cross as the nullification of the ordinances of Judaism was in the apostolic age.

12. The plea that marriage is founded in nature will not bear investigation. Experience testifies that the human heart is capable of loving more than one at the same time. It is not the loving heart but the green-eyed claimant of the loving heart that sets up the one-love theory.

13. A system of Complex Marriage will open the prison doors to the victims both of marriage and celibacy: to the married who are oppressed by lust, tied to uncongenial natures, separated from their natural mates; to the unmarried who are withered by neglect, diseased by unnatural abstinence, or plunged into prostitution by desires that find no lawful outlet.

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14. The Kingdom of God on earth is destined to abolish death.

15. The abolition of death is to be the last triumph of the Kingdom of God. Christ cannot save the body until he has "put down all [present] authority and rule," and organized society anew. It is true that, since life works legitimately from within outward, the social revolution ought not to be commenced until the resurrection power is established in the heart. The shell ought not to be broken until the chick itself is strong enough to make the breach. Yet in the order of nature the shell bursts before the chick comes forth. Just so the breaking up of the fashion of the world must precede the resurrection of the body.

16. The chain of evils which holds humanity in ruin has four links: first, a breach with God; second, a disruption of the sexes, involving a special curse on woman; third, oppressive labor, bearing specially on man; fourth, death. The chain of redemption begins with reconciliation with God, proceeds to a restoration of true relations between the sexes, then to a reform of the industrial system, and ends with victory over death.

It was the special function of the Apostolic Church to break up the worldly ecclesiastical system and reopen full communication with God. It is the special function of the present church, availing itself first of the work of the Apostolic Church by union with it and a re-development of its theology, to break up the worldly social system and establish true sexual and industrial relations.

From what precedes it is evident that no one should attempt to revolutionize sexual morality before settlement with God. Holiness, communism of love, association in labor, and immortality must come in their true order.

17. The amative branch of the sexual relation is favorable

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to life. The propagative branch is expensive of life. The problem that must be solved before redemption can be carried forward to immortality is to secure the benefits of amateness while reducing the expenses of propagation to what life can afford. This can be done through Male Continence.

18. Sexual shame is factitious and irrational. The moral reform that arises from the sentiment of shame attempts a hopeless war with nature. Its policy is to prevent pruriency by keeping the mind in ignorance of sexual subjects, while nature is constantly thrusting those subjects upon the mind. The only way to elevate love is to clear away the false, debasing associations that usually crowd around it, and substitute true, beautiful ones.

19. The foregoing principles furnish motives for Association. They develop in a larger partnership the same attractions that draw and bind together a marriage partnership. A Community home, where love is honored and cultivated, will be as much more attractive than an ordinary home as the Community outnumbers a pair.

These principles also remove the chief obstruction to Association. There is a strong tendency to crossing love even in marriage. Association inevitably increases this. A confederation of contiguous states with custom-house lines around each is sure to be quarrelsome. The only way to prevent smuggling and strife in such a confederation is to abolish custom-house lines from the interior, and collect revenues by one custom-house line around the whole. The Shakers avoid this stumbling-block, but they sacrifice the life of society in securing its peace.

20. Association to be valuable must be not mere compaction of material but community of life. A congeries of loose particles cannot make a living body; no more can a congeries of loose double particles. Just so in Association individuals and pairs as well as all larger combinations must be knit together organ-

## Bible Communism

ically and pervaded by one common life. Association of this kind will be to society what regeneration is to the individual, a resurrection from the dead. Bible Communism, as this kind of Association may properly be called, demands the surrender not only of property and conjugal interests but of life itself to the use of the whole. If this is the "grave of liberty," as the Fourierists say, it is the grave of the liberty of war, which has done mischief enough to deserve death; and it is the birth of the liberty of peace.

21. In Bible Communism excessive labor will be done away. Labor is excessive or not according to the proportion between strength and work. Bible Communism increases strength by placing the individual in an organization which receives life from its source and distributes it with the highest activity. It reduces work by reducing the needed amount of food, raiment and shelter. As society becomes vital and refined, drawing its best nourishment from happiness, the grosser kinds of food, especially animal food, will go out of use, and the fruits of trees will become staple. Woman's dress will be simple and beautiful and nearly the same as man's. Buildings too will be more compact, and much labor now expended in accommodating egotism and exclusiveness will be saved.

In Bible Communism labor, no longer excessive, will become naturally attractive. Loving companionship will contribute to this result. When the partition between the sexes is taken away, when fashion follows nature in dress and vocation, men and women will mingle like boys and girls in their employments, and labor will become sport.

22. We can now see our way to victory over death. Reconciliation with God opens the way for reconciliation of the sexes. Reconciliation of the sexes excludes shame, and opens the way for Bible Communism. Bible Communism increases strength, diminishes work, and makes work attractive. Thus

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the antecedents of death are removed. First we abolish sin, then shame, then the curse on woman of exhausting child-bearing, then the curse on man of excessive labor, and so we arrive regularly at the tree of life. Gen. 3.

23. The men and women who are called to usher in the Kingdom of God will be guided not merely by theoretical truth, but by direct communication with the heavens, as were Abraham, Moses, David, Paul. This will be called a fanatical principle. But it is clearly a Bible principle, and we must place it on high above all others as the palladium of conservatism in the introduction of the new social order.

We hereby notify all that we neither license nor encourage any one to attempt the practice of this theory without clear directions from the government in the heavens. No movement in these matters can be made safely in the way of imitation, nor on the mere ground of acquaintance with the theory of the new order. Other qualifications besides theory are required for the construction and handling of a locomotive, and much more for the management of such tremendous machinery as that of Bible Communism. Whoever meddles with the affairs of the inner sanctuary without true spirituality securing inspiration will plunge himself into consuming fire.



## Chapter 15

### WITHDRAWALS FROM THE CORPORATION

1843-1844

**D**URING 1843 and 1844, while the Association movement in America was gaining adherents by the thousand, the Putney Corporation lost nine adults and five children by voluntary withdrawal. These defections amounted to more than one-third of the membership. Nearly all were due to the stiffening of discipline under Noyes's leadership and the increasing use of criticism as a means of government.

Harvey Bowles was the first to go. He left in January 1843 after a conversation in which Noyes reproved him for light-mindedness and a worldly spirit.

Next went David Wilder. There is no indication that he took offense at Noyes's plainness of speech. When he returned to his home in New York State in February, he left a paper certifying to the "moral worth and purity" of the Putney Perfectionists and declaring himself "in complete unity of spirit with them," while they in turn authorized him to act as agent for *The Perfectionist*. For nearly two years thereafter he was principally employed as an agent and missionary of the Putney School.

George Wilder soon followed his brother. Noyes had criticised him for indolence, pride and independence, and had concluded as follows: "If you are ready to say to all this, I will not be watched and admonished in this way by any man, then I say to you, make up your mind that we must part, for I shall watch and admonish all with whom I am associated until they are without fault." George left in March and, though he remained friendly, took little further part in the Perfectionist movement.

Mrs. Clark was criticised by the Corporation for unkind and disrespectful treatment of her husband. The trouble however was deep-seated and grew worse rather than better. A committee appointed to investigate recommended that the family retire from the Corporation. They did so early in April.

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Shortly after this Sherwood, who had been rebuked for uncharitableness toward Lyvere, became discontented and left with his wife.

Alexander Wilder after a year's experience with Noyes's plainness of speech wrote him thus: "It has appeared to me that a studied effort has been made to reprove, or rather to reproach me before others. . . . I have been puzzled by your language, and have at times supposed you were harsh to me." He gradually became alienated. In February 1844 he accepted an invitation to preach in Greencastle, Pennsylvania. But he was in no fit condition of body or mind to fulfill such a mission. Perfectionists of Greencastle supplied him with funds and he returned to his home at Verona. Afterward he took three college degrees, and practised medicine for several years, finally becoming an editorial writer for *The New York Evening Post*. He was the author of numerous articles and books on medicine, ethics and religious mysteries. In 1872 he was a member of the Board of Aldermen which ousted "Boss Tweed" from control of New York City. At his death in 1908 his ashes by his written request were scattered at the base of a tree.

In January 1844 Noyes charged that Mr. Palmer's daughter was attacking the citadel of salvation from sin. "I never have and never can," wrote Noyes to Mr. Palmer, "scruple to regard any one as a willful unbeliever who rejects our doctrine of the second coming after having fairly examined the testimony upon which it rests; . . . and if our meetings are not spiritual, if we are worldly, if we are settled upon our lees, then we are sinners. . . . Now, Brother Palmer, . . . if I were in your place, I should regard your daughter as an offender against God and his church. I should take the steps with her which are prescribed by Christ, and if they failed to effect a reformation I should openly hold her as a heathen and a publican."

The Palmers left. Their departure however was friendly. At the Corporation meeting to bid them farewell Noyes remarked that during the previous two years he had gained much experience that strengthened his heart. He had been made more fully sensible that "the whole world lay in the Wicked One," and also that we were sustained by the goodness and provident care of God. The Corporation had passed through a tight squeeze, but possibly a tighter was before it; he had become willing to see the Corporation dissolved, and the paper stopped. Mr. Palmer responded that he felt drawn to the Corporation more than ever; it was to him a father's house. Noyes replied, that Satan would be foiled and dis-

## Withdrawals from the Corporation

appointed in the manner of the Palmers' leaving; the world were expecting that they would leave full of evil reports; instead they were only taking another position in the field. Mr. Cragin added that Satan was defeated on both wings of his army, for it was supposed at Newark that Leonard would not return. Noyes said that mutual criticism was the modern equivalent of "washing one another's feet." The feet represented that part of our character which was concerned in outward affairs; and though our essential character might have been washed, as Christ said, "every whit clean," our superficial character might still require to be frequently cleansed. Thus we might submit our feet to Christ to be washed, and also obey his injunction to "wash one another's feet." Mr. Palmer called the meeting a "love feast."

## Chapter 16

### THE BELCHERTOWN IMBROGLIO

**A**FTER Noyes discontinued his personal activity at Belchertown his hold on the place was for more than two years contested by rival Perfectionist leaders. This contest, though apparently local and trivial, came when Perfectionism was on the point of evolving into full Bible Communism; and we may see in it the effort of Noyes to forestall irresponsible free-love among his followers, and the grappling of fierce personalities for the mastery not alone of Belchertown Perfectionism but of the entire Perfectionist movement.

The first of these rival leaders was David A. Warren of Verona, New York. He came to Belchertown in April 1843 and preached to large audiences. Longley commended him as "a man of God, much to be beloved." Even Noyes wrote that he surmised the Lord was bringing Warren to Belchertown "in the right time and to good advantage." But in August Noyes wrote to Longley that he had more and more reason to believe that Warren was after all a legal Perfectionist; and Cragin, who was visiting at Belchertown, wrote to Noyes: "I hope God will not permit our Belchertown brethren to have much more preaching, for I believe it is an injury to them. They have had quite a relapse since Warren was here."

Next came James Boyle,<sup>1</sup> with whom Noyes had been associated in the publication of *The Perfectionist* at New Haven in 1834. When Noyes heard that Boyle had consented to preach at Belchertown he wrote to Longley: "I have not altered my mind about him. Regarding him as a traitor to the gospel, I must say that, if he comes in among you, I shall make open war upon him with all my strength. I will lose every subscriber to my paper and break brotherhood with every friend I have before I will put my neck into the yoke with Boyle and his company." This ended the plan of Boyle's preaching at Belchertown, but it was the beginning of a rift in the circle of believers. Some denounced Boyle, while

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 160-168, 298-301.

## The Belchertown Imbroglia

others could see little difference between Boyle and Noyes, especially in regard to a desire for leadership.

The third candidate for leadership was Alexander Wilder. Charles Olds wrote to Noyes in December 1844: "Alexander Wilder has recently spent two weeks at Belchertown. He came directly from the Theocratic Conference<sup>1</sup> at Lairdsville, New York, sent as he claimed by God. He attacked the doctrines of the Origin of Evil and the New Birth, said that no one was now born of God in any sense, and that his own experience was of the 7th of Romans character. . . . He believes his brother David to be the great champion of true Perfectionism."

REMARKS BY NOYES ON THE WILDER APOSTASIES

*The Perfectionist* DECEMBER 28, 1844

We have been aware for some time that Alexander and David Wilder were dealing treacherously with us. The evidence of their enmity came to us not in any straightforward way from themselves, as both are ostensibly our friends and agents for our paper, but by indirect reports of their acts and insinuations. These men have been in fellowship with Prindle, who holds that multitudes in the churches are born of God without being aware of it. The Wilders, it now appears, hold that nobody on earth is born of God. We account for this marvellous mating thus: The spirit that hates and seeks to destroy the testimony of holiness has two strings to his bow. He prompts one class to teach that all sorts of people are born of God, and another that nobody is born of God, his object being to restore the equilibrium which existed before the doctrine of holiness began to disturb the sinful churches. The testimony of these men is to be credited so far as it relates to themselves and no farther. We have had as much reason as any one to distrust the professions of Perfectionists. Yet we put far from us the arrogant, uncharitable judgment that all who profess salvation from sin are deceived or deceivers. We

<sup>1</sup> Page 80



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know one man who has the witness of the spirit that he is born of God, and we have good reason to believe that there are considerable numbers who can honestly bear the same testimony.

Alexander Wilder's attack on Noyes plunged the Belchertown Perfectionists into a turmoil of doubt as to Noyes's position in the church. While the discussion of Noyes's claim to confidence was going on, Warren wrote to Longley: "I have heard something of the situation in Belchertown. It is to be deplored, but I know not how to help it. I think much of Brother Noyes, but after all I believe at present there is more theory about him than spirit. There is evidently about him a desire to be a leader and the originator of every new truth that is good. He is a great pugilist. How long he has been abusing Brother Boyle without a word from Boyle in return! He seems to exult in the downfall of others. It is written, and it is true, that he that is glad at calamities shall not go unpunished. . . . He is full of self-justification. This does not belong to saints. . . . I believe Brother Noyes is of Israel, and will eventually be broken down as I and some others have been. And the more pride of opinion he has about his theory, the greater will be his fall."

Still another rival preacher was Charles D. Mead.<sup>1</sup> He had embraced Perfectionism in Central New York under Foot and Dutton, and had moved to Ohio, where he had preached from place to place causing commotions and excommunications from the church. He had been for several years in the toils of a legal conscience, but in January 1839 had experienced, as he believed, the "new birth" and the "resurrection of the body" which gave everlasting freedom from sin and law.

CHARLES D. MEAD TO NOYES

Chardon Jail, Geauga County, Ohio,

November 27, 1839.

*Dearly beloved Brother Noyes:*

I was highly pleased in the perusal of *The Witness*. . . . Your views of expediency, of the use of women, wine, money and carnal weapons God has taught me to be true. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Charles D. Mead was not related to Noyes's brother-in-law, Larkin G. Mead of Brattleboro, Vermont.—G. W. N.

## The Belchertown Imbroglia

When I first read your Battle-Axe Letter I was somewhat startled. It was more than a year ago at the house of James Boyle. . . . I then thought Shaker ground was preferable; so did he. But my fears are now altogether removed. . . .

In April last the Lord told me I was joined to a certain woman, and repeated it three times. But I did not confess it for some time, for indeed it was a heavy cross. The woman had a husband after the law, and he a great enemy, a perfect reprobate. But in May or June the witness came again so strong, I dared not resist it, and it was a glorious season indeed. . . .

Though I felt thus joined to all who had come into the redemption, soon afterward I found myself brought into an order or appointment with one as I was not with the rest. . . . Now the one with whom I stood in the order or appointment of God was Ann, a sister of John B. Foot. She had also a husband by the law, but they both had seen for nearly a year that God never joined them, and gave up the relation. He acknowledges this to be of God, and he became my bondsman in the sum of four hundred dollars. We lived together all under the same roof in great peace and quietness until we had occasion to go to Hudson; and where we stayed over night the woman, who was an opposer, said if we stayed there we must sleep together. We told her we could in innocence. We did, and that gave occasion of complaint. About one month afterward I was taken with a state's warrant. I have been brought before two justice's courts, and two of common pleas, convicted in all, had twenty days in Portage County on bread and water, and thirty days in Geauga County, and two hundred dollars fine. I am now on my thirteenth day. Ann was tried but once. She has been in ten days, and gone home. My sentence is the extent of the law against adultery in this State. John B. and myself were tarred and feathered in Batavia, Geauga County,

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where his friends reside. The whole of this matter, tar, feathers, jail and all have been made perfectly easy. God is over all. I had to do as I have done. I am now free to submit to the ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

In love,

CHARLES D. MEAD.

Mead had been the first to sow the seed of Perfectionism at Belchertown, having preached there before Noyes's campaign of 1842. After his long residence in Ohio he returned to Belchertown about the first of January 1845 and found Noyes in possession. He was warmly welcomed by Longley, who wrote of him to Noyes as honest, frank and open-hearted, led he had no doubt by the spirit of God. A month later Mead appeared at Putney bearing a letter of introduction from David Wilder.

Noyes wrote out the following statement of his position, and the day before Mead returned to Belchertown handed it to him. Mead read it in Noyes's presence, commenting as he read:

Putney, January 31, 1845.

*Brother Mead:*

I judge from your conversation thus far that you are not inclined to enter into any definite agreement of coöperation with me, and that you think I am anxious for some arrangement which will bring you into bondage. On the latter point you are mistaken. I think no evil of you for your offense and imprisonment, but so far as my usefulness in the world is concerned I perceive clearly that your reputation will be no advantage to me. This would not prevent me from acknowledging you as a brother and fellow-laborer in the gospel nor from defending you as at present an innocent man, if you should place yourself in a position where this would fairly be demanded of me. Yet it is a consideration which naturally makes me somewhat indifferent whether you join me or go by yourself. And further, I certainly have no desire in any case to exact any tribute which God does not exact in my

## The Belchertown Imbroglio

behalf. My circumstances are not favorable to worldly ambition. I have lived for more than a year in sober expectation of shortly putting off this tabernacle. I made the suggestion, from which I presume you took the impression that I was anxious to bring you into bondage, in consequence of learning from the Belchertown brethren that you expressed a purpose in coming here to "submit" to me. I was disposed to open the door for a plain talk about our relations to each other, and what I then hinted I will now avow as a fundamental principle in any partnership between myself and one in your circumstances. It is that such a person shall forward my labors by taking pains as far as possible to extend the circulation of the paper, and that I on the other hand will forward his labors by such influence as I am able to exert through the paper and other channels. I think there is nothing dishonorable or unequal in such an arrangement and, if a man declines it, this indicates to me that he has no hearty zeal for my purposes, and that any partnership between us would be useless.

I am anxious not that you should submit to me in any servile sense, but that you should do that which your position as one who received the truth of the gospel through my writings makes it natural and proper that you should do, listen to me without jealousy and take advice of me. You perceive the need at Belchertown of subordination. The same need exists on a larger scale. . . .

I foresee distinctly that, if you decline any agreement with me and continue to labor in the same fields with myself, there will be collisions between us. I have not felt inclined to dispute with you about your views of experience, yet I am satisfied that your theory has taken its shape too much from the mold of your own history and that of New York Perfectionists generally. I do not deny that the way which you have passed and which you mark out for others is one road of experience, but



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I know that mine took a different course. You have also, if I understand you, a theory about a state higher than that of the second birth, which is manifestly contrary to Scripture. I do not wholly approve of the confidence which you seem to put in Madame Guion and William Law. They said many good things but they knew nothing of the second birth. The brethren at Belchertown found fault with you because your course in relation to Alexander Wilder seemed somewhat equivocal, and they do not exactly like your method of "making yourself all things to all men." I speak of these things to show you the reasons which I have to anticipate that, unless we come to some definite agreement such as may lead us to unity of heart and effort, there will be difficulty between us.

If you ask what I would propose as a means of avoiding the difficulty, I answer, I would not seek to limit your liberty to go or do or speak as you are led. Yet I would tell you plainly, that I think your appropriate business at present at least is not to carry a theory of experience to believers, but to preach the first elements of the gospel to unbelievers. Having thus told you my mind I would leave you to the Lord's discipline, trusting that by his grace we might be able to walk together in love.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN H. NOYES.

"This document produced considerable commotion in Mead's spirit," wrote Noyes, "but he did not appear offended. We talked the matter over for several hours, and at the end an amicable feeling seemed to prevail between us. Yet he did not decisively assent to my proposals, but rather persisted in keeping his position of isolation. How it will turn with him I know not." Soon afterward Charles P. Kellogg wrote to Noyes from Belchertown: "Mead thinks that you want to fetch all believers under your control. He says, if you are ahead of him in experience, he has it yet to learn; and he has stated here, that as true as there was a God you would have to come down."



## The Belchertown Imbroglío

NOYES TO C. P. KELLOGG

Putney, April 1, 1845.

*Dear Brother Kellogg:*

If the believers in Belchertown wish for my opinion of Mead's letter, a copy of which was sent here, I will say that, to my mind, it is full of the refined essence of legality. Its aim is to reduce the birth of Christ in the heart to as small an affair as possible, and to smother it under self-suspicious, apostolic exhortations falsely applied. . . . The exhortations of the gospel, if disjoined from their soul which is the power of Christ's resurrection in the heart, make as foul a carcass of legality as any other kind of law. Indeed there is no law-bondage equal to that which encompasses a man who adopts the doctrine of holiness, and then goes to work on the old plan of watching, criticising, doubting himself, and seeking his justification in doing the duties prescribed in the exhortations of the apostles. And this is the plan which Mead's letter holds forth.

The truth is, the present is not the time to turn the attention of believers to the department of duties. The battle is yet raging, and just now fiercer than ever, around the great central fact, the birth in the heart. The Devil is sending his emissaries thick and fast to assail the citadel of justification. At such a time my exhortation is: Stand firm, be not entangled again with the yoke of legal bondage, count any man a traitor to Christ who seeks to turn your attention from the work of God in the heart to self-measuring and duty-doing. The only hope you have of ever doing any duty is in your being able to say boldly: "A risen Christ is in me, and I am forever saved from all sin."

I have convincing tokens that many of the leading Perfectionists in the State of New York have actually though not

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altogether openly lost their justification and abandoned the clear testimony of salvation from sin. Alexander Wilder is more unguarded than Mead, but at bottom they are not far apart. I believe there are many true brethren in the State of New York, but they are altogether a different class from those who are in fellowship with Wilder and Mead. I say this to put you on your guard. There is a legality more deceitful than Oberlinism or old-churchism, particularly in the State of New York, which is writhing and squirming under the clear testimony of the paper, and will try every device of imposture and every shaft of malice against me, before it will die and leave the field to the gospel of eternal holiness. The battle just finished has gone against the old serpent most decidedly, but I look for more hissing and poison.

Yours affectionately,

JOHN H. NOYES.

The last of those to contest Noyes's supremacy at Belchertown was Dr. Josiah Gridley of Southamptton, Massachusetts. Dr. Gridley had taken part in the proceedings of antinomian Perfectionists at Southamptton and Brimfield in 1835,<sup>1</sup> and Noyes in attempting to fix the responsibility for those proceedings had exchanged letters with him as follows:

NOYES TO DR. GRIDLEY

Putney, July 8, 1840.

*Dear Brother:*

I have been fully persuaded these three years that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about New Haven Perfectionism will ultimately be found its best defense. You are doubtless aware that in pursuance of the plan I have commenced in *The Witness* I must by and by speak of the relation which New Haven Perfectionism bears to the Perfec-

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 199-200.

## The Belchertown Imbroglio

tionism of Southampton and Brimfield. The strange doings of 1835 stand right in my pathway. I shall not run away from them nor attempt to evade them. The adversary points to them and says: "By their fruits ye shall know them," and so the people stop their ears. This stumbling-block must be taken away. So long as my confidence in you and the others at Southampton and Brimfield remains, I feel bound to do nothing affecting your interests without your knowledge and consent. Hence my object in writing is to open my views to you now in a private manner.

First and chiefly I deny that the strange doings in question are the fruits of New Haven Perfectionism. Perfectionism at Southampton and Brimfield was planted by New York Perfectionists, and the irregularities commenced under the administration of Dutton and Lovett, whose Perfectionism originated not at New Haven but in New York. I was there just before, but the Lord caught me away in season to escape the tornado, and I deny that I am in any way responsible for it. . . .

I will not deny that the New Haven doctrine of the abolishment of law was an occasion of what was done; but the cause was previous legality. If a pendulum is swung six inches past the center to the right and held there by some extraneous force, when that force is taken away the pendulum will surely tend to swing six inches beyond the center to the left. On the subject of sexual morality the church and the world have swung men far beyond the center to the right. Perfectionism took away the restraining force, and some swung far beyond the center to the left. In this case the church and the world are the cause, for they placed men in a position of unnatural restraint; Perfectionism was the occasion, though the innocent occasion, for the abolishment of law is an essential feature of the gospel, and must not be kept back let the consequences be what they may. . . .

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If you assent to these views, you will have no objection to my presenting them to the public when occasion demands. If you do not assent, or if you see anything to correct or suggest, please write.

Yours,

J. H. NOYES.

DR. GRIDLEY TO NOYES

Southampton, July 13, 1840.

*Dear Brother:* . . .

You have expressed the cause of the irregularities to which you refer just as I have always seen them. . . . The saints here (not as a whole but individuals) did have a wild frolic. Why? They verified Jehovah's prediction, "They shall go forth as calves from the stall." . . .

I cannot father my perfection upon you, or Brother Dutton, or Truair, or the Annesleys. . . . I feel that it came directly molded by the God of heaven. . . . I see no necessity for calling names . . . certainly in relation to those who have had honest hearts, and have been but slightly tintured and that for a very short time only. A general admission of facts, I feel, will be sufficient for all honest inquirers. . . . I cannot see the distinction you seem to make between New York and New Haven Perfectionism, as you term them. The question where it originated or the day of its birth appears to me of much smaller moment than whether they are one and the same thing. . . .

I must confess in frankness and in faithful brotherly affection . . . that pure gospel truth unmixed would remove the rubbish in your pathway very much faster than any renunciation, denunciation or explanation. There is not half as much trouble with the past or present as there is hungering for the Living Bread in this vicinity. . . . Still, for the result I know

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not but you are pursuing the more excellent way. I have written with a spirit of suggestion and not of dictation in the least. I fear however, if you assume the spirit of a leader, you will lose the spirit of Christ; and I am certain that the circulation of the paper has been greatly retarded in consequence of the want of interest in its readers in relation to some of its subjects, such as "The Secret History of Perfectionism." The gospel part has been mostly sweet, very sweet. . . . I have written the last few lines for myself and others both in town and out of town, as my observation has extended.

Yours in the love of Christ pledged—forever pledged—to every good work,

J. A. GRIDLEY.

Although far from satisfied with Dr. Gridley's position, Noyes attempted no further discussion with him at the time. But in 1843, when he found that Dr. Gridley was rising in influence, he cautioned the Belchertown Perfectionists against him. Dr. Gridley replied in the following letter, of which Noyes later remarked: "I never got such a thrashing from anybody in my life as from him. He wrote me such a letter that I could not tell for some time whether I was a scoundrel or not."

DR. GRIDLEY TO NOYES

Southampton, July 24, 1843.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

We hear that Brother Noyes tells the people in Belchertown that he has no fellowship with the saints in Southampton, that there must be confession, etc. Well, Brother . . . I have but one interest in this world or that which is to come, and that is the advancement of God's cause. . . . We have long ago lived down the accusations of the adversaries of holiness . . . and are ready to bear in patience and love whatever its friends may please to exercise towards us. . . . If we have done anything worthy of death or of bonds, we refuse not to



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die; but if the allegations brought against us are not true, then . . . the breach, if there be one, should be healed. I have no desire to conceal the fact that in 1834-5 . . . the Devil pressed hard upon our sails, and thus drove some of us beyond the sea of discretion. The same kind of wind blew here from the east, west and north, and I may add *south*, for several that were direct from New Haven have declared most emphatically that they received their first lessons in theory at least directly from yourself; that it was not superior grace but your natural timidity of women that saved you. . . . My ship never reeled . . . till these winds all met in a mighty whirl. . . . Yet in it all He who rideth upon the wings of the wind did not forsake me. . . . You may call them what you will; to me they were the days of childhood, if you please foolish childhood, through which I shall never again pass, though like my first childhood they have left no sting behind. . . . Finally, the spirit of which I have spoken was not a native of this place, but wholly imported from abroad. . . . I am tired of the things behind, and wish to forget them. . . .

I shall do whatever the Lord bids me in relation to sustaining *The Perfectionist*. It is the only paper in which, as a whole, I have any interest. . . .

Love to the brotherhood. Whenever God wills, we hope they will pass this way.

J. A. GRIDLEY.

Dr. Gridley, whom Noyes describes as "a Thompsonian doctor and pill-vendor, brassy, smart, witty and licentious," attended the Perfectionist Convention at Belchertown in the fall of 1844, and helped to draft the resolution declaring "deep interest in the realization of an external as well as internal union of believers." He afterward kept up an active connection with the Belchertown Perfectionists by correspondence and visits. At length in May 1845 the pent-up dissensions burst into open flame.

## The Belchertown Imbroglio

JOSHUA LONGLEY TO NOYES

Belchertown, May 21, 1845.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

I have refrained from saying anything to you about the state of feeling in Belchertown hitherto, because I have been in hopes that the clouds of darkness that have arisen would soon pass away. And I would even now be silent, were it not for the fact that Brother Cragin is here and has very attentively heard one side of the question only, which, as I have reason to believe, has produced some little bias in his mind against my wife. . . .

'Tis not a great while since a brother in conversation with Mrs. Longley said: "You stand in the teaching of John Noyes." And now the cry is: "She does not think so much of Brother Noyes as formerly." And many other things are said, which ought never to escape a brother's lips, such as these: "She has testified beyond her experience," "she is crazy," "she has a crooked spirit," "she is under Mead's influence," "she has said words of a licentious tendency." Words too it is said she used, which she never spoke. . . .

The time has been when the Belchertown believers had perfect confidence in each other, but it is not so now. This difference of opinion has arisen chiefly because Mrs. Longley could not feel to decide against Mead. I have never said much in his favor, neither should I feel justified to say, "He hath a devil." I have said like this, "To his own master he stands or falls."

Yours in love,

JOSHUA LONGLEY.

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NOYES TO JOSHUA LONGLEY

Putney, May 23, 1845.

*Dear Brother Longley:*

It is high time that I should say some plain things to you and to the brethren in Belchertown about sexual morality. I cannot clear myself of responsibility without bearing testimony against some things which are reported to me about the practices of Mead and others with women at Belchertown. You remember my warnings on this subject. I have not changed my mind. I cannot, I will not be associated with adulterers and fornicators, and such, I believe, are some of those who have come among you and still have influence over certain of your number.

A man who has once been guilty of adultery ought to be watched, especially if he asserts his innocence in that adultery, though he may confess its folly and inexpediency. This is Mead's position. If he would gain confidence as a pure-minded man, he ought to avoid the appearance of evil. This, I am satisfied, he has not done. From Brother Hopkins' letter, from Brother Cragin's report, and from various other sources I have evidence that he makes himself especially familiar with women wherever he goes. . . . He is the chief agent of this evil among you, and I will not name any one else at present. But this I say to you: I will have no fellowship with those who disgrace the cause of holiness by giving occasion of reproach. Let them be who they may, I shall admonish them and, if admonition fails, I shall separate myself from them publicly.

I thank God that I have reason to believe there is a spirit of honesty and purity in the believers at Belchertown which will heartily coöperate with me. Let us as one man lift up a standard against the spirit which bewitched and defiled Brim-

## The Belchertown Imbroglia

field, Southampton and other places in 1835, and which still lurks in New York, if not in New England, and is leaking in among you.

Your brother,

JOHN H. NOYES.

To this Longley replied May 30th: If Mead had an adulterous influence over any sister in Belchertown, Longley had it yet to learn; nor had Longley any adulterous spirit to purge out of his own heart; Noyes should hear both sides in order to be a competent judge, and if he persisted in receiving the testimony of one part of the professed believers against the other part, more especially against Mrs. Longley, Longley must and would stand in her defense till he drew his last breath.

NOYES TO JOSHUA LONGLEY

Putney, June 10, 1845.

*Dear Brother Longley:*

I am under the influence of no prejudice against any one in Belchertown, and I have not judged with that partiality which you seem to impute to me. I brought no accusation against your wife, nor against any particular person except Mead. With him I am personally acquainted, and I have so much testimony from others corroborating my own impressions that I cannot think the case doubtful even to you. . . .

I will remind you of some things to which I only alluded in my last letter. I am informed that Dr. Gridley in your house and in your presence made himself foolishly free with women and that you heard him make suggestive, indecent remarks though claiming to be free from sexual desire. Now Gridley's past is much like Mead's, and he gives evidence by such things that he is neither pure nor trustworthy. I think you ought not to excuse these things nor shut your eyes to them, but join with me in condemning them. . . .

I am becoming more and more convinced that God does not and will not employ as teachers and leaders of his church

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men who after professing the faith of the gospel fall into scandalous sins. It seems to me that by suffering them thus to fall he has put them out of office and set a mark on them to warn the churches against their influence. They may in some instances truly repent and purify themselves. But if they do, they will not be forward to become teachers and leaders. A bishop "must be blameless, of good behavior, having a good report of them that are without." 1 Tim. 3:1-9.

I am far from impeaching your honesty or righteousness of heart. But I think in time past you have lacked discrimination, and have been too fond of inviting strangers among you. Your present troubles evidently come from the influence of "false brethren brought in unawares." And I think at this time your attention is so much taken up with the bearing of my letter on your wife that you do not fully sympathize with my jealousy for the purity of the church. You have had evidence enough in the events of last winter that the leaders of western Perfectionists are at war with me and have no hearty fellowship with the gospel which we hold. When you are convinced of this, it will be for you to choose between them and me. I shall wait patiently until you take your side. I know that your temperament is exceedingly averse to the "strange work" which I have been compelled to engage in, that of detecting and rejecting false influences, and I do not blame you for this aversion. I love a peaceable, affectionate spirit. But there is no way through this world which is not beset by impostors, and now when you are compelled to condemn and cut off brethren on one side or the other I beseech you to look the whole matter over calmly, without partiality especially for your wife; for there seems to be great reason to urge you to follow holiness in preference to friendship.

Yours truly,

JOHN H. NOYES.



## The Belchertown Imbroglío

Replying on June 12th Longley clung to his position; he saw nothing in Mead that was inconsistent with a Christian; he knew of only two instances in which Dr. Gridley was foolishly familiar with women; these he did not excuse, though he would not dare to say that Dr. Gridley meant any wrong; a long detail on paper would do no good, but in a personal interview he might say some things which would entirely change Noyes's mind; as the matter stood he felt that he and his wife had been condemned unheard.

NOYES TO JOSHUA LONGLEY

Putney, July 1, 1845.

*Dear Brother Longley:*

By Brother Skinner's help I have heard both sides, and have studied the whole matter in question between us long and calmly. God knoweth that my eye is single to the truth. I certainly have no interest in wounding or discrediting you or your wife. The good deeds which you have done to me and to the cause naturally incline me strongly in your favor. But I must not allow this fact to disable my judgment and hinder me in reproving evil. I am in a better position for judging impartially in this case than you are, because I am less interested personally and farther removed from the excitements and irritations to which you are exposed. As you acknowledge me your spiritual father, and as I have certainly had more experimental acquaintance with false spirits than you have, I think I may fairly claim that you hear me with respect and confidence, not in a spirit of retort, and not in a purpose braced to justify yourself.

I say then again that I am convinced (and more than ever since Brother Skinner's visit) that a lewd, deceitful spirit has gained a lodgment in Belchertown. I do not doubt your sincerity when you say that you do not see it. But I have evidence that your eyes are blinded by a spirit that comes upon you through your wife, and upon her through Mead and Gridley. Let me lay before you some of this evidence. You have heard

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Mrs. H——'s testimony concerning Mead's attempt to seduce her. You say you will not deny it, but you evidently do not allow it any weight. Why is this? Plainly because your wife persists in justifying Mead and your judgment is swallowed up in hers. She thinks that, if Mrs. H—— had not resisted Mead, Mrs. H—— would have received a valuable baptism from him! . . .

Again, you dare not censure those indecent acts of Gridley any farther than to say that they were inexpedient. Now in this case I have evidence as to what was your own unsophisticated judgment before you had time to take counsel of your wife. You were indignant against them, and wished that Gridley might never come to Belchertown again. After those acts I understand that she had much fellowship with Gridley, and having been prevented from going to Southampton by your judgment was much chagrined. It is also said that soon afterward you received a letter from Gridley putting you below your wife in experience and reproving you for hindering her from going as she was led, which letter much affected you; that you vowed never again to interfere with her, and that she finally went to Southampton without you and against your will. Now let me say that, in my judgment, your leadings were the true ones; and the facts, that your first indignation against Gridley has been changed into soft censure, that you have approved of your wife's intimacy with him, and that you have been brought to reverence him so that he could trap you into that vow of submission to your wife, show plainly that you are woefully blinded by the witchcraft around you.

I beg you to let my judgment have as much weight as Gridley's, when in the teeth of his assertion I say deliberately that you are in advance of Mrs. Longley in true experience. She is in advance of you in mysticism, in vainglorious testimony, and in the knowledge that puffs up into infallibility. But the more

## The Belchertown Imbroglio

experience of this kind one has, the worse he is off. If you stood in your true place, trusting God's leadings in your own heart and leading your wife as a husband should, you would both walk wisely, and the difficulties which now beset you would be avoided. . . .

As to the personal difficulties between you and other brethren at Belchertown, I think I see evidences of a hasty, fault-finding, exaggerating spirit among those who have stood against you. I shall resist that spirit as faithfully as I have resisted the spirit of delusion. But let me say to you, as I have said to others, there is no possibility of a reconciliation if either side sets itself up in a stiff spirit of self-justification. There must be a yielding disposition, a submission to reproof, a melting down into modesty and forgiving love. I would not have you or any of the parties say: "I have done wrong wilfully," for I do not believe that such is the fact. But I would have you say: "We have been deceived; Satan has taken advantage of our social affections to mislead us, and of our combativeness to embroil the whole body of believers." I trust we shall yet foil the Devil and not lose a man; that the brethren and sisters at Belchertown will return from their delusions and recriminations to the simplicity of their first love, drowning all discords in the old shout, "*Holiness to the Lord.*"

Yours truly, JOHN H. NOYES.

In a concluding letter July 13th Longley denied point-blank all of Noyes's allegations, made a spirited defense of his wife, appealed from Noyes's judgment to that of God, and requested that discussion be dropped.

### NOYES'S WORD OF WARNING

*The Perfectionist* JULY 12, 1845

No shame or fear of consequences shall ever make us retract the sentiments of the Battle-Axe Letter. The unwise have

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converted those sentiments to purposes of licentiousness against our strenuous resistance. We have reminded all that the present is not the time of realization but of preparation; that the resurrection of the body must precede the everlasting marriage. Our own example has been blameless, and we have faithfully exposed all offenders that have come within the range of our influence and responsibility. By these means Perfectionism has been to a large extent cleared of the corruption which once threatened to overwhelm it. But within a few months we have seen indications that the old spirit of confusion and uncleanness is still alive, and we therefore address to all pure-minded believers the following suggestions:

1. The worst enemies of the cause are those who disgrace it.
2. Beware of allowing a leading influence to those who have been formerly involved in licentious disorders.
3. Brotherly love stands ahead of sexual love.
4. Be on your guard when you see religious teachers fond of indulging in bodily contacts.
5. Believe no one who professes to have attained the resurrection of the body.
6. Believe no one who boasts that he is free from sexual desire.
7. Bear in mind that the Shaker and the libertine are alike in their fundamental error, an over-estimate of the importance of the outward act of sexual union.
8. Beware of engaging in or conniving at deeds which it is necessary to conceal.

The next day Dr. Gridley wrote to Noyes that he would define his position "boldly, frankly, honestly and with humility" on the subject that had "raised so much legal jealousy of late in Belcher-town." He enclosed a lengthy deposition, a mixture of mesmerism and mysticism, and requested that it be published in *The Perfectionist*.



## The Belchertown Imbroglia

NOYES TO DR. GRIDLEY

Putney, July 18, 1845.

*Dear Sir:*

I do not like to publish the document which you have sent me. I have no sympathy with its spirit and no confidence in any of its principles. It does not savor of the New Testament, but of Madame Guion and Latourette. I have no desire to make my paper the medium of diffusing its influence. If you intend it as a plea in justification of yourself, there is no occasion for publishing it, as you have not been attacked in the paper. The proper place to send it is Belchertown, where the discussion of your proceedings is going on.

If you insist upon my publishing your plea as a defense of your course, probably I shall do so, that you may have no occasion to say that I deal unfairly with you. But I shall be obliged in justice to the truth to comment upon it unfavorably, and to make known the course of life which it is designed to justify. Some facts too will be revealed which do not fall within the scope of your apology. . . .

You think my rule that a bishop should be "blameless, having a good report of them that are without" would exclude me from office if allowed full force. I have a good report for modesty of all who know me, and have never given occasion for reports to the contrary. I do not extend that rule to flying reports of enemies at a distance who know nothing of the man. But a bishop should have a good report of those who are immediately around him; otherwise he cannot be useful to them. The reports which I hear of you even from your own brethren in Southampton, from Mead, from brethren in Belchertown, and transactions which I have myself witnessed indicate to me that you are not blameless.

I think it would be better for you and for the readers of



## The Putney Community

the paper that these matters should be discussed by private correspondence, at least for the present. I am entirely disposed to amicable proceedings, but I am determined to resist the spirit of uncleanness without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Yours in faithfulness, J. H. NOYES.

NOYES TO DR. GRIDLEY

Putney, July 30, 1845.

*Dr. Josiah A. Gridley,*

*Sir:*

Your letter of the 27th covers so much ground that it will be impossible for me to comment upon the whole immediately. It shall be attended to in due order and time.

A good rule of law is that the parties to a suit shall confine their pleadings as much as possible to a single point. For the present therefore I shall confine my attention to the B—— affair. I called for testimony on that matter not to hold you at present censurable for it, but because I heard that you denied at Belchertown actual adultery with Mrs. B——. Thus far the affirmative evidence seems clear and strong, and yet I have in your last letter evidence that you are disposed to deny the fact. You impeach the veracity of Moses Ben Juda for no other purpose but to discredit his testimony on this point. You mention that the door was open, that the family was passing and repassing, that Mr. B—— came into the room. You say that “no mortal eye saw the least contact.” This leaves room for the supposition that the eye of God saw. Sardis Chapman also writes that you took the same course with him. Now, sir, you cannot at the same time have the benefit of both a public denial and a private mental reservation. You must either deny the fact without quibbling, when you will have to confront the proof; or you must confess, when you will prove yourself now

## The Belchertown Imbroglia

an adulterer and a liar ; an adulterer in that you have attempted to conceal and so have endorsed a former adultery ; a liar in that you have endeavored to give me and others a false impression.

JOHN H. NOYES.

### NOYES'S ULTIMATUM ON THE BELCHERTOWN QUARREL

JANUARY 1847

The quarrel pending at Belchertown is not so much between me and the Longleys as between me and Mead, Wilder and company. . . . My correspondence with the Longleys contains all the matter in dispute. . . . To try the case by discussion again and again is folly. . . . Discussion in a case where every one has the evidence before him is not likely to change any but weak minds ; and even if minds could be changed and the decision of believers reversed, the position of the parties to the quarrel would not be changed. The court in this case has no power of execution. The Longleys have shown by withdrawing from the circle of believers that they are not to be subdued by a mere judgment of their fellows. And I freely avow that, if the decision of believers had been against me, my mind would not have been changed.

I appeal from all further discussion to the judgment of God. If I have taken upon me more than I ought, he will bring me down ; if I have acted wisely for him and for the cause of holiness, he will bring down my adversaries. Let the two parties go on their separate ways till God shows which is in the right way.

If the Longleys seek reconciliation with the believers, they should be told decisively that they can attain their object only by reconciliation with me. If they seek reconciliation with me, the first step is to re-open correspondence. They requested a discontinuance. Until they take back this step I shall not intrude

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upon them. I am ready to go on with the correspondence from the point where we left off, and I desire that the end of the matter as well as the beginning may be in black and white.

JOHN H. NOYES.

"These strange defections," wrote Noyes, "make it evident to me that among the many nominal Perfectionists there are but few real ones, especially among the leaders. I have more and more reason to bless the wisdom of God which has thus far prevented us from attempting anything like a general organization. Until God shall bring together a band of those who not only believe the doctrine of holiness but have its spirit and are one in heart I pray that we may remain scattered. Our great want for the present is good men; rather I should say discrimination between the good and the bad, for I have much confidence that the good exist here and there among us if they could only be brought out of their false fellowships into a knowledge of and a union with each other. God is giving us in these astonishing and troublesome events a lesson in the art of discrimination. We must receive it into our hearts."

## Chapter 17

### AMERICAN SOCIALISTIC EXPERIMENTS

THE period from 1841 to 1846, when the Community at Putney was in its most plastic state, was also the period when more than a hundred years of sociological experimentation in America had reached an impassioned climax. A brief review of the theories and attempts of this idealistic era will show the relation between Noyes's scheme of social reconstruction and those of his contemporaries.

First there were several groups of religious non-conformists that had migrated from Europe to escape persecution and had adopted communism as the most practical means of securing the common welfare in pioneer America. The Ephratists were established in 1732, the Rappites in 1805, the Zoarites in 1819, and the Amana Society in 1842. The maximum membership ranged from three hundred at Ephrata to nearly eighteen hundred at Amana. But in America they made few converts and formed no branches. Economically they were highly successful and near the zenith of prosperity when Noyes was laying his foundations at Putney. They attracted thousands of visitors. They were however European not merely in origin but in personnel, outlook, even in language, and consequently had less influence on American life than the groups that followed.

Next were the Shakers, founded in 1776. They also were an American Community with a background of European religious dissent. But they had more points of contact with contemporary life. Their personnel was recruited largely in America. They were active propagandists, having branch families in every part of the country and a membership that reached as high as thirty-nine hundred persons. Their religion with its strange dancing and shaking, its mediumistic manifestations, and its control of the living by the dead was akin to Modern Spiritualism. Their communism of property was not merely a means of combating the difficulties of pioneer life, but a cardinal principle of society. Their strict separa-

## The Putney Community

tion of the sexes appealed strongly to a class always present. Religious revivals, so notable a feature of mid-nineteenth century America, they called "hot-beds of Shakerism." Because of these characteristics the Shakers attracted unusual attention. Their steady but unostentatious prosperity stretching over a long period of years was an eloquent testimony to the possibility of Christian communism. Noyes, who visited them and studied their writings as early as 1835, said that Socialism was indebted to the Shakers more than to any other social architects of modern times.

In all these Communities communism was subordinated to religion, and could advance only so fast and so far as religious unity could be attained.

A communism that was free from the trammels of religion and could be multiplied within a measurable time to cover the earth was proposed by Robert Owen, called by Noyes the "father of Socialism." Born in Scotland in 1771, manager of the New Lanark Cotton Mills at the age of twenty-eight, a pioneer in the application of industrial welfare to production, Owen amassed a large fortune and won enormous prestige not only in Great Britain but throughout Europe. In 1820 he published a book describing the results of his administration at New Lanark and presenting a general scheme for the rational reconstruction of society on the basis of the idea that "man's character is formed for him by the circumstances that surround him, and that these circumstances are to a great extent under the control of human governments." He proposed to "cut the world up into villages of three hundred to two thousand souls; allot each person an area of land varying from one-half an acre to one and a half acres; place the dwellings of each village in the form of a parallelogram with common kitchens, eating apartments, schools and places of worship in the center; require every person to forswear individualism and work for the common benefit."

The Rappites, having determined in 1824 to move, sought out Owen in England, sold him Harmony, Indiana, with all its dwellings, factories and lands for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Thus in the spring of 1825 Owen, renaming the town "New Harmony," stepped into a theater ready-made for his unexampled feat in social engineering.

Owen then invited "the industrious and well-disposed of all nations" to emigrate to New Harmony. He spoke before large assemblies. His lectures in the Hall of Representatives at Washington were attended by the President, the President-elect, the judges of the Supreme Court, and many members of Congress. Within a



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short time nine hundred persons were drawn together. Noyes's mother with thousands like her was electrified, and Noyes himself, though only a boy of thirteen, could in later years vividly recall the thrill of an impending social millennium which shot through the American nation.

The experiment lasted two years and two months. Explaining his failure Owen said that he wanted honesty of purpose but found dishonesty, wanted temperance but found intemperance, wanted industry but found idleness, wanted cleanliness but found dirt, wanted carefulness but found waste, wanted a desire for knowledge but found apathy, wanted the principles of the formation of character understood but found them misunderstood.

In addition to New Harmony nine Communities are known to have been formed about the year 1825 under the influence of Owen. The Yellow Springs Community, occupying the site of what is now Antioch College in Ohio, comprised seventy-five or a hundred families and lasted about a year. The Community founded by Frances Wright at Nashoba, Tennessee, based on Negro labor directed by benevolent whites, lasted a little more than two years. The rest, including some whose names even have been forgotten, survived but a few months.

In the transition from Owenism to later socialistic movements Noyes found that Josiah Warren functioned as a modulating chord. After seeing the wreck of communism at New Harmony, of which he was a member, Warren swung clear over to the quintessence of individualism. For the cure of all social ills he invented the formula, "the sovereignty of the individual, to be exercised at his own entire cost." This idea helped prepare the public mind for Fourierism, which carried the principle of individual sovereignty into industry and domestic life. Warren spent more than twenty-five years in the attempt to apply his formula to the property relation. His experiments failed, though they lasted long enough, Warren claimed, to demonstrate the practicability of his scheme. Disciples of Warren then applied individual sovereignty to the sexual relation. This phase of Warren's principle was taken up by Modern Spiritualists and produced in the eighteen-fifties a violent epidemic of "free-love."

The next group of socialistic innovations was the one to which the Putney Community originally belonged. As the Putney Community was an offshoot from New England orthodoxy, so Brook Farm was an offshoot from New England Unitarianism, and Hopedale from New England Universalism. If we pass by in each case the period of preparation, the three began at about the same

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time, the Putney Community in February 1841, Brook Farm in October 1841, Hopedale in April 1842. All were native American both in concept and execution. Yet they felt to some extent the impulse of the European importations, especially Fourierism, which at that time began to be known in America. It is noteworthy that this group, following Josiah Warren's individualism, adopted the joint-stock principle of property ownership. But the Putney Community in March 1845 abandoned this and set up complete communism of property.

### EMERSON'S REMINISCENCES OF BROOK FARM

In the year 1840 Dr. Channing took counsel with Mr. George Ripley on the point if it were possible to bring cultivated, thoughtful people together, and make a society that deserved the name. He early talked with Dr. John Collins Warren on the same thing, who admitted the wisdom of the purpose, and undertook to make the experiment. Dr. Channing repaired to his house with these thoughts; he found a well-chosen assembly of gentlemen; mutual greetings and introductions and chattings all around, and he was in the way of introducing the general purpose of the conversation, when a side-door opened, the whole company streamed in to an oyster supper with good wines, and so ended that attempt in Boston. Channing opened his mind then to Ripley, and invited a large party of ladies and gentlemen. I had the honor to be present. . . . I said the only result of the conversations which Dr. Channing had was to initiate the little quarterly called *The Dial*; but they had a further consequence in the creation of the society called the "Brook Farm" in 1841. Many of these persons who had compared their notes around in the libraries of each other upon speculative matters, became impatient of speculation, and wished to put it into practice. Mr. George Ripley with some of his associates established a society, of which the principle was that the members should be stockholders, and that while some deposited money others should

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be allowed to give their labor in different kinds as an equivalent for money. It contained very many interesting and agreeable persons. Mr. Curtis of New York and his brother of English Oxford were members of the family; from the first also was Theodore Parker; Mr. Morton of Plymouth—engaged in the fisheries—eccentric; he built a house upon the farm, and he and his family continued in it till the end; Margaret Fuller, with her joyous conversations and sympathies. Many persons gave character and attractiveness to the place. The farm consisted of 200 acres, and occupied some spot near Readville camp of later years. In and around it, whether as members, boarders, or visitors, were remarkable persons for character, intellect and accomplishment. . . . The Rev. Wm. H. Channing, now of London, student of socialism in France and England, was a frequent sojourner here, and in perfect sympathy with the experiment. . . .

Brook Farm existed six or seven years, when the society broke up and the farm was sold, and all parties came out with a loss; some had spent on it the accumulations of years. At the moment all regarded it as a failure; but I do not think that all so regard it now, but probably as an important chapter in their experience, which has been of life-long value. What knowledge has it not afforded them! What personal power which the studies of character have given! What accumulated culture many members owe to it! What mutual pleasure they took of each other! A close union like that in a ship's cabin of persons in various conditions, clergymen, young collegians, merchants, mechanics, farmers' sons and daughters, with men of rare opportunities and culture.

Brook Farm in mid-career was converted to Fourierism, which was then at the flood tide of expectant experimentation. Having adopted the name and form of a regular Fourieristic Association, Brook Farm in June 1845 commenced publishing *The Harbinger*

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as the successor and heir of Brisbane's paper, *The Phalanx*, thus taking over the literary responsibilities of Fourierism.

The destruction by fire of the nearly completed Phalanstery, or unitary dwelling, in March 1846 was a blow from which Brook Farm never recovered. The organization lingered and *The Harbinger* continued to be published until October 1847, when the final dispersion took place and the leaders entered the service of *The New York Tribune*.

"If I might suggest a transcendental reason for the failure," wrote Noyes, "I should say that Brook Farm had naturally a delicate constitution owing to the fact that its tendency to literature was stronger than its tendency to religious and social unity. The tendency to literature as represented by Emerson, finding its *summum bonum* in individualism and incoherent instead of organic inspiration, is the farthest pole from Communism."

SKETCH OF HOPEDALE BY ITS FOUNDER, ADIN BALLOU

PAMPHLET DECEMBER 1, 1851

The Hopedale Community, originally called "Fraternal Community No. 1," was formed at Mendon, Massachusetts, January 28, 1841, by about thirty individuals from different parts of the State. In the course of that year they purchased what was called the "Jones farm," *alias* "The Dale," in Milford. This estate they named "Hopedale." . . . About the first of April 1842 a part of the members took possession of their farm and commenced operations under as many disadvantages as can well be imagined.

Their present domain . . . contains about 500 acres. Their village consists of about thirty new dwelling-houses, three mechanic shops with water-power . . . a small chapel . . . and the old domicile with the barns and out-buildings much improved. There are now at Hopedale some thirty-six families, besides single persons . . . making in all a population of about 175 souls. . . .

[Hopedale] is a church . . . based on a simple declaration of faith in the religion of Jesus Christ . . . and of acknowl-



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edged subjection to all the moral obligations of that religion. No person can be a member who does not cordially assent to this comprehensive declaration. Having given sufficient evidence of truthfulness in making such a profession, each individual is left to judge for him or herself with entire freedom, what abstract doctrines are taught, and also what external religious rites are enjoined in the religion of Christ. . . . But in practical Christianity this church is precise and strict. . . . It insists on supreme love to God and man. . . . It enjoins total abstinence from all God-contemning words and deeds; all unchastity; all intoxicating beverages; all oath-taking; all slaveholding and pro-slavery compromises; all war and preparations for war; all capital and other vindictive punishments, all . . . violence against any government, society, family or individual; all voluntary participation in any antichristian government; . . . all resistance of evil with evil; in fine, all things known to be sinful against God or human nature. . . . It does not expect immediate and exact perfection of its members, but holds up this practical Christian standard, that all may do their utmost to reach it, and at least be made sensible of their shortcomings. . . .

### ITS ADVANTAGES

It affords a theoretical and practical illustration of the way whereby all human beings, willing to adopt it, may become individually and socially happy.

It guarantees to all its members and dependents employment at least adequate to a comfortable subsistence; relief in want, sickness or distress; decent opportunities for religious, moral and intellectual culture; an orderly, well-regulated neighborhood; fraternal counsel, fellowship and protection under all circumstances, and a suitable sphere of individual enterprise



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and responsibility, in which each one may by due self-exertion elevate himself to the highest point of his capabilities.

It solves the problem which has so long puzzled Socialists, the harmonization of just individual freedom with social coöperation. Here exists a system of arrangements, simple and effective, under which all capital, industry . . . skill and peculiar gifts may freely operate and coöperate, with no restrictions other than those which Christian morality everywhere rightfully imposes, constantly to the advantage of each and all. . . . Here property is preëminently safe, useful and beneficent. It is Christianized. So in good degree are . . . skill and productive industry.

It affords small scope . . . for the unprincipled, corrupt, supremely selfish. . . . Such will hasten to more congenial localities, thus making room for the upright, useful and peaceable.

It affords a beginning . . . and a presage of a new and glorious social Christendom, a grand confederation of similar Communities, a world ultimately regenerated and Edenized. All this shall be in the forthcoming future.

### NOYES'S COMMENTS ON HOPEDALE

Hopedale held on its way through the Fourieristic excitement, solitary and independent, and consequently never attained as much public distinction as Brook Farm and other Associations that affiliated themselves to Fourierism; but considered by itself as a Yankee attempt to solve the social problem it deserved more attention than any of them. . . .

Let it not be thought that Ballou was a mere theorizer. Unlike Owen and Fourier he worked as well as wrote. Originally a clergyman and a gentleman, he gave up his salary and served in the ranks as a common laborer for his cause. Ofttimes in the early days of Hopedale he would be so tired at his work

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in the ditch or on the mill-dam, that he would lie down on the sunny side of a haystack, wishing that he might go to sleep and never wake again. Then he would recuperate and go back to his work. Nearly all the recreation he had in those days was to go out occasionally into the neighborhood and preach a funeral sermon.

It will be noticed that Ballou carried his assurance to the verge of presumption. But in the end he manfully owned that Hopedale was a total failure. The men and women he brought together were not suitable for a Community. They were at first zealous and seemed sincere, but they did not know themselves.

The details of the break-up show the dangers of introducing the joint-stock principle into communism. One of those who came to Hopedale enthusiastic for the cause was Mr. E. D. Draper. He was a sharp, enterprising man, and soon became the managing spirit. He was at the same time associated in business with a brother who had no sympathy with the Community. They gained wealth by their outside operations, while the inside interests fell into neglect. Meanwhile Mr. Draper bought up three-fourths of the stock. In 1857 he became dissatisfied, and told Ballou that the Community must come to an end. "There was no other way," said Ballou, "but to submit." He asked but one condition, that Mr. Draper assume responsibility for the debts. Thus ended the Hopedale Community.

We come finally to the Fourieristic group of experiments, which in volume of enthusiasm, in number, in capital invested exceeded all that had gone before. Charles Fourier, a Frenchman, after pondering for years in his study, brought forth a plan of social organization elaborated to the largest comprehensiveness and to the smallest detail, a plan that seemed to unite human beings in a concordant community just as the laws of harmony unite musical instruments in a symphony orchestra. Fourierism unlike Owenism contained a religious element, but unlike the Shakers and the other

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strictly religious Communities it subordinated religion to association. No attempt was ever made to realize Fourierism in Europe save an abortive one disowned by Fourier from the start. For practical demonstrations the old-world dreamers turned once again to America. In 1840, three years after the death of Fourier, Albert Brisbane, a young American who had learned Fourierism in France from Fourier himself, published *The Social Destiny of Man* introducing Fourierism to America. Two years later, aided by Horace Greeley who gave him a daily column of *The New York Tribune*, he launched a publicity campaign that aroused a nation-wide excitement like the religious revivals of the preceding decade and led to the formation of Fourieristic Associations in plenty.

### FOURIER'S THEORY OF ASSOCIATION

CONDENSED EXTRACTS FROM FOURIER'S *Theory of Social Organization*, AND ALBERT BRISBANE'S *Concise Exposition of the Practical Part of Fourier's Social Science*

The destiny of man is to elevate himself to universal unity by means of the three primary unities:

Unity of Man with God in true Religion.

Unity of Man with Man in true Society.

Unity of Man with Nature in creative Art and Industry.

The true order of society will enormously increase production by rendering labor at once attractive and efficient. It will introduce enormous economies by gathering people into large families and eliminating the following classes of non-producers: women, children, servants, armies and navies, fiscal agents, manufacturers in part, the commercial class, the transporting class, forced idlers, sophists, the idle rich, outcasts.

The organization of Association requires simply a knowledge of the art of forming and developing in complete accord a number of passional series, impelled by attraction alone, and occupied with the seven following functions: domestic indus-

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try, agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, teaching, science, the fine arts.

A Group is a body of persons who combine from taste for the prosecution of any occupation. A full Group should be composed of at least seven persons, and form three Sub-Groups, the center one of which should be stronger than either of the two wings.

A Series is composed of a number of Groups, as Groups are composed of individuals. A Series must contain at least three Groups; and the central Group should be stronger than either of the wings. Twenty-four persons is the least number with which a Series can be formed. As there will be a strong emulation between the center and the wings, and as the wings will unite in their efforts to excel the center, the latter must be more numerous in order to be able to vie with the wings.

The members of an Association will choose freely the Groups which they wish to join. The members of the Groups and Series will choose the most skillful or experienced as officers, giving them titles like that of President and Vice-President. The emulation which will exist between Groups and between Series will be noble and friendly, and will give a powerful attractiveness to industry.

Every Group and every Series will be an independent body. As no coercive measures are admitted in the Combined Order, the works to be executed are indicated, not ordered, by the Supreme Council of Industry, which we will call the Areopagus. This Council is composed of the superior officers of the different Series. Its functions are advisory. It will not, for example, order a harvest. It will declare merely from certain observations that such or such a time is in its opinion favorable, after which each Group or Series will decide according to its own judgment.

Every person in Association will belong to several Groups,



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engaged in different pursuits at different times of the year; occupations will also be varied during the day. This variety of pursuits prosecuted with agreeable companions will exercise all the faculties of body and mind and lead every individual to form friendships with a large number.

Any lazy person will be informed by the Secretary of the Group, that it wishes no members who do not take a strong interest in its success, and he would in consequence be invited to withdraw. Numerous other occupations more suited to his taste and capable of calling out his energies would be open to him.

An Association is a Series of Series, as a piano is a series of octaves; and we can no more have social harmony without a sufficient number of Series than we can have musical harmony without a sufficient number of octaves.

The Groups and Series are so adapted to human nature as to allow a free and harmonious development of all the passions; and they will, when applied to industry, render it attractive.

For an Association on the full scale about eighteen hundred persons are necessary. Such an Association requires for its domain a tract of land three miles square. This tract should be watered by a fine stream; its surface should be undulating and adapted to a great variety of branches of agriculture; it should, if possible, be flanked by a forest, and located near enough to a large city to admit of easy communication with it. Diversity and inequality of characters should be sought for; the greater the variety of characters that exists among the members, the easier it will be to associate and harmonize them. As many branches of agriculture as the soil will admit of should be prosecuted, so as to facilitate the formation of a large number of Series. At least three branches of manufactures should be selected to give occupation during the winter



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months and rainy days. Several branches of art and science will also be cultivated independently of the schools.

In the center of the domain the Association will erect a commodious and elegant edifice, capable of accommodating comfortably the members, with spacious and convenient suites of apartments separated by division walls and at different prices to suit the fortunes of the inhabitants; also storehouses, granaries and other necessary outhouses. The edifice, rising in the midst of the finely cultivated fields and gardens of the domain, would present a beautiful spectacle of architectural unity.

The personal and real estate of the Association will be represented by stock divided into shares, which will be owned by those who furnish the capital pro rata according to the amount invested. By this means unity of interests will be secured jointly with the maintenance of individual property. Three million dollars, leaving aside the purchase of the land, the price of which cannot be determined, will be sufficient.

The reason for fixing at eighteen hundred the number of members for an Association on a complete scale is this: Theory indicates that there are 810 distinct types of human character, and 405 intermediate types. These characters constitute the collective man, possessing all the faculties necessary to the prosecution of industry, art and science, and all the varieties requisite to the creation of social harmony. To maintain this number of active members it will be necessary to add: children under five years of age, 250; the aged, 55; the sick, infirm and absent, 100. This makes a total of 1620 persons, which is the exact number indicated by theory; but owing to the want of vigor, passional development, dexterity and skill on the part of our civilized population, the number of members will require to be increased during the first generation to 1800.

The direction of internal affairs will, in the beginning, be

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intrusted to a Council composed of the principal stockholders and of members distinguished for their industrial and scientific acquirements. Women will be on a level with men in all practical matters, provided they possess the skill and capacity.

The Association recognizes no community of interests nor of property. Families and groups of friends will be free to put into a common stock what they possess, if they desire to do so; but the Association opens on its books an account with each member, even with the child five years of age, at which time it begins to produce.

The profits of the Association, determined by a general inventory, are distributed once a year as follows: five twelfths to labor; four twelfths to capital; three twelfths to skill. Each person may, according to his labor, capital and skill, participate in one or all of these three classes of profits.

The Association would guarantee the stockholders a revenue, clear of all charges, varying from six to eight per cent, and would at any time repurchase their shares at the price of the last inventory, with interest for the part of a year that has elapsed.

The tables will be of different prices, at least three. All equality and uniformity are a poison in social politics.

In Association there will be, as a general rule, no buying and selling between individuals. If a person desires, for instance, to purchase a suit of clothes, he goes to the Clothing Group and has them made, but does not pay the Group; they are charged to him on the books of the Association, with which he will settle. Just prices will be established for everything by the Council, and an individual would not have to bargain or be subject to the imposition and extortion of a seller. Each Series will be paid not out of the product of its particular work, but out of the total product of the Association.

The various branches of industry will be classed in three

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categories: 1. repugnant but necessary; 2. moderately attractive; 3. attractive. As a general rule the more attractive a branch of industry, the less it will be paid. There are some exceptions however to this rule. Music and some of the fine arts, for example, will be found of such high importance in producing industrial attraction and in maintaining social unity, that they will probably be placed in the category of necessity.

Practical experiments will gradually show the class to which each branch of industry should belong. If a branch drew a larger number of persons than were required, the Series devoted to it would be lowered in rank and paid less. If on the other hand a branch tended to be neglected, additional incentives would be connected with it, one of which would be assigning it a higher rank. By this and other means equilibrium will be maintained.

In an Association domestic service will be performed, like every other branch of work, by Groups and Series. These when on duty will bear the title of Pages. Under this system the poorest individual of an Association will be as attentively served as the richest, for it is not the individual served who pays. A Page would be dishonored were he to receive any personal recompense. There will be nothing mercenary or servile in the domestic service of the Combined Order. To serve the Association as a Collective Being is to serve God; it is in this light that domestic service will be regarded. A Group of Chambermaids, a Group of Waiters is like any other Group, a free and honorable body, which is paid from the general product of the Association a sum proportionate to the value of its labors; and this sum is divided, as is customary in the Series, among the members according to their capacity and assiduity. Besides, a member of one of these Groups may an hour after his work is over in the dining-halls or elsewhere be found in other Groups coöperating with members on whom he waited

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previously, and who may hold an inferior position as regards capacity or skill.

The Group of Pages that wait upon the tables will be composed for the most part of young persons between the ages of nine and fifteen; they will perform the work with more alacrity and willingness than grown persons; besides, such service will have nothing dishonoring whatever for them.

There will be in Association a Series which will take upon itself from a sentiment of self-sacrifice and social charity the performance of those functions which are in themselves repulsive. This Series will be called "The Sacred Legion," and will take precedence of all other Series. It will be composed principally of boys of an ardent temperament from the age of nine to sixteen. Boys have at this age no natural antipathy to dirty or offensive contacts. The Series must be numerous enough so that the attention of the members will be required only an hour or two every other day, and admission must be made difficult and considered a signal favor.

The whole system of attractive industry and social harmony would fall prostrate if means were not found of connecting powerful incentives with the execution of all uncleanly, repulsive branches of work. If there existed in the Combined Order one single function which was deemed degrading for the persons that exercised it, this degradation would gradually extend from branch to branch, and the result would be that those persons who lived in idleness and were of no service to mankind would constitute as at present the polite and respected classes. The Sacred Legion will rank as the Servant of God in the maintenance of industrial unity. Preserver of social honor, it will purge from society a venom worse than that of the viper. In assuming all filthy and repulsive occupations it will smother that pride which in undervaluing any of the industrial classes would destroy general friendship and establish anew



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the spirit of caste. It will be the center of all the social virtues, and will furnish one of the four supports (the third) on which Association will rest: industrial attraction, equilibrium in the division of profits, friendly intercourse between all classes, equilibrium of population without unnatural restraints.

The Sacred Legion will be paid by honors without end! In important industrial enterprises it will take the lead; it will receive from the highest authorities the first salute; in the church its place will be at the altar; and in all ceremonies it will occupy the post of honor.

MacDonald, called by Noyes the "Old Mortality" of American Socialisms, listed thirty-four Associations that were formed in America on the Fourieristic model during the period 1843-1846. Twenty-eight of these perished before the end of their second year. The Spring Farm Phalanx lasted three years, the Trumbull Phalanx three and a half years, the Northampton Community four and a half years, the Wisconsin Phalanx six years, the Brook Farm Association six years, and the North American Phalanx twelve and a half years.

The causes of failure, according to MacDonald's memoirs, were insincerity, selfishness, dishonesty, intemperance, uncleanness, laziness, ignorance, religious differences and bad management. "In a word," says Noyes, "general depravity was the villain of the story." Brook Farm alone, apparently, was harmonious to the end. Its failure resulted from the fact that, in the pithy phrase of Charles A. Dana, "it did not pay."

### NOYES'S CRITIQUE OF FOURIERISM

#### *The Perfectionist 1844-5*

*The Harbinger* is one of the pleasantest of our exchanges. It is not a Bible paper, and therefore cannot be ranked among the necessities of life, but it is one of the raciest luxuries in the market. If the "march of mind" be conceived of as the march of German and French mind with Fourierism, Mesmerism, Phrenology, Swedenborgianism, Goetheism and Bee-



## The Putney Community

thovenism for its advance guard, *The Harbinger* is the little drummer at the head of the column; and most cheerily he beats the charging step, whether he is going to victory or ruin. . . .

Fourierism as pictured in *The Harbinger* and as exemplified we suspect at Brook Farm is likely to make very fine butter of the cream of society, but will hardly save the skim-milk. . . .

We are free to avow that in many points the philosophy of Fourier agrees well with ours. But we have no hope of perfecting human nature by improving its external conditions. We think that the Fourierists have begun at the wrong end. They are trying to build a chimney by beginning at the top; and we think they will fail not because we do not believe that chimneys can and should be built, but because we do not believe that such heavy structures can be durably built on anything but a firm foundation and by beginning at the bottom. The great problems of our relation to God and of the relation of the sexes, which the Fourierists postpone as of no pressing importance, we consider the first to be solved. For this reason the philosophy of the New Testament seems to us more true, more profound, more practical than that of the Fourierists. . . .

We agree that a Christian order of society is necessary to the complete external embodiment of Christian life. But Christian life itself is as independent of physical circumstances as the horseman of his horse. It can ride an ass-colt or a wild Shetland pony as well as an Arabian steed. It can accommodate itself to any circumstances and triumph over their temptations. For more than thirty years Christ lived Christianity in a state of society at least as bad as the present. His perfection was manifested by the fact that he was strong enough to go into society as it was and live there without sin till he could prepare the elements of a better world. To our minds it is a

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cowardly idea that the world in its wickedness is too strong for us. The charge given to every soldier of Christ is to "overcome the world;" and shame will be the portion of him who faints in the battle and begs of the enemy the mercy of better circumstances.

## Chapter 18

### SWEDENBORGIANISM

COMPILATION BY NOYES 1867

THE foremost and brightest of the Fourieristic Associations was that at Brook Farm. . . . But the remarkable fact, for the sake of which I am calling special attention to it, is that this Association brought before the public not only a new socialism but a new religion; and that religion was Swedenborgianism.

Swedenborg is known as the eighteenth century seer and revelator, the founder of the New Church. His writings had long been circulating feebly in America. But during the period when Brook Farm was in the ascendant there was a movement of the public mind toward Swedenborg as palpable and portentous as were Millerism and the old revivals.

Swedenborgianism went deeper into the heart of the people than the socialisms that introduced it, because it was a religion. The Bible and revivals had made men hungry for something more than social reconstruction. Swedenborg's offer of a new heaven as well as a new earth met the demand magnificently. He suited all sorts. The scientific were charmed, because he was primarily a son of science, and seemed to reduce the universe to scientific order; the mystics, because he led them boldly into all the mysteries of intuition and the invisible worlds; the Unitarians, because, while he declared Christ to be Jehovah himself, he displaced the orthodox ideas of son-

## Swedenborgianism

ship and tri-personality; even the infidels favored him, because he discarded thirty-two of the sixty-six commonly accepted books of the Bible. Fourierism without a corresponding religion was too bald a materialism for the higher classes of its disciples, and the enthusiasts of Brook Farm made Swedenborgianism its complement.

*The Harbinger* displayed under its title a motto selected from the writings of Swedenborg, and its five semi-annual volumes contained between thirty and forty articles on Swedenborg. The burden of all these was the unity of Swedenborgianism and Fourierism; the Swedenborgians insisted that Fourier discovered the divine arrangement of society which Swedenborg foreshadowed, and the Fourierists that Swedenborg revealed the religion which Fourier anticipated. A most characteristic utterance of the Fourierists was the saying of John S. Dwight: "In religion we have Swedenborg; in social economy Fourier; in music Beethoven."

In 1845, when the movement toward Swedenborg was in full tide, George Bush, professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in the University of the City of New York and long a favorite oracle of the orthodox church, was converted and took the lead of it. He wrote me in October of that year: "The system [of Swedenborg] is beginning to excite deep interest in this region. I have had crowded houses in attendance upon a short course of lectures on the subject in this city. Among my regular hearers are your old friends Boyle and Weld. They are both, I believe, confirmed receivers. They called together and had a long chat with me the other day. I know also that the Oberlin folks are entering upon the study of Swedenborg."

After several letters had passed between us I prepared an article for the press on Swedenborg's treatment of the Bible. It was short and to the point. I got my facts from Sweden-

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borg's own books, and knew that they were sure and would tell. But how to get them before the public was the question. *The Perfectionist* had a circulation of only five or six hundred. I knew that the religious papers generally would not quote from it, nor would they print anything written by me if aware of the authorship. So we betook ourselves to stratagem. We printed the article on slips as newspaper proofs without date, place or signature, and sent them to all the religious papers in the country. The experiment succeeded. Professor Bush wrote me: "Your industrious zeal in circulating the censure of 'Swedenborg's Bible' has undoubtedly produced its effect. It has had a wide publication, and has riveted the prejudices of multitudes of minds. Yet I anticipate ultimate good from it. It will lead to deeper investigation of the central question of all theology, that of the canonicity of the Scriptures and the true nature of inspiration. The result will show on which side the genuine reverence for the Word as a truly Divine Writing is found."

### SWEDENBORG'S BIBLE

There is one fact in relation to the writings of Swedenborg which ought to be known in these days of his increasing popularity. He excludes from his canon of the Word of God many of the most important books in the received Scriptures, particularly the writings of Paul. The following is his manifesto *ex cathedra* on this subject: "The books of the Word are all those which have the internal sense; but those which have not the internal sense are not the Word. The books of the Word in the Old Testament are the five books of Moses, the book of Joshua, the book of Judges, the two books of Samuel, the books of Kings, the Psalms of David, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi; and in the New Testament the four Evangelists,



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Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Revelations." This list excludes Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the song of Solomon in the Old Testament; and the Acts, Paul's fourteen epistles, the epistle of James, the two epistles of Peter, the three epistles of John and the epistle of Jude in the New Testament.

The above citation may be found in a note appended to the 66th section of Swedenborg's *Heavenly Doctrine*. The same statement appears elsewhere several times in his writings, but it is not put forth into much prominence. He seems to have avoided all discussion of it, and to have chosen a silent rather than a violent and offensive method of ejecting the writings of Paul and others from the Bible. . . .

His estimate of the intellectual and spiritual attainments of the apostles and primitive Christians may be seen in the following extract from *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem Respecting the Sacred Scripture*, Section 24: "The reason why the science of correspondences, which is the key to the spiritual sense of the Word, was not discovered to later ages, [i.e. ages subsequent to the patriarchal period] was because the Christians of the Primitive Church were men of such great simplicity that it was impossible to discover it to them; for had it been discovered, they would have found no use in it, nor would they have understood it." . . .

NOYES TO PROFESSOR BUSH

Putney, October 13, 1845.

Dear Sir:

I purchased all the works of Swedenborg which you recommended to me, and some others. I have read the greater part of them, and shall finish the remainder as soon as my other duties permit. Meanwhile I have formed some opinions which, in accordance with your invitation, I will present to you.

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I might say much of those things in Swedenborg's system which commend themselves to my understanding. But praising him to you would be "carrying coals to Newcastle." I shall therefore confine myself to fault-finding, in hopes that I shall either convince you that he is not a safe teacher, or that I shall be convinced by you that my criticisms are not well founded.

Before entering upon a discussion of particular doctrines an examination of the sources of Swedenborg's theology is in order. What relation does his system sustain to the Bible? My opinion bluntly expressed is that the Bible occupies in Swedenborg's works a position similar to that which it occupies in the Koran of Mahomet. Both alike stand independent of the Bible and above it, and both use it merely as an auxiliary to their own revelations.

Swedenborg makes the authority of the Bible secondary to his own in two ways : First, he takes upon himself to decide in a summary manner what part of the Bible is the Word of God and what is not. In the New Testament he finds but five books that belong to the Word, namely the four Gospels and the Apocalypse. The epistles of Paul and the other apostles are indeed allowed to be in some sense good books, but are excluded from all authority and are scarcely ever alluded to in his writings. Second, having excluded that part of the Bible which he could not well manage, he has taken full possession of the rest by his doctrine of the "internal sense." If the literal sense opposes him or does not answer his purpose, he ousts it without ceremony and tells us what the internal sense is. I have seen no evidence that the determination of the internal sense even in his own mind is governed by any fixed laws. I do not believe that any of his followers, however well acquainted with his views, can develop for themselves the internal sense of any

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part of Scripture and at the same time keep in consistency with him and with each other.

I have no quarrel with the idea that spiritual teaching takes precedence of the letter of the Bible. But this idea is to be applied only in private experience. A man who knows that he is in communication with God may set the inward above the outward word for himself; but not for another, because the communication of the inward word to another by speech or writing is itself nothing but an outward word.

Neither have I any quarrel with the idea that God may give new revelations in these times. But I assume that He will never contradict Himself, and that His former revelations are the nucleus of those to come. . . .

I agree with you that Swedenborg presents the great problems which the world is yet to study, but not that he has solved them; and this is the best thing I can say of him.

Respectfully yours,

J. H. NOYES.

NOYES TO PROFESSOR BUSH

Putney, November 6, 1845.

*Dear Sir:*

I cannot for two reasons allow the "astonishing attributes" of Swedenborg to drive me into reverence for him. In the first place I have seen so many signs and wonders in connection with false spiritualisms, that I have learned to abide in the *nil admirari* attitude. I cannot account fully for the astonishing attributes of Mahomet, of Jacob Behman, of Shakespeare, of Napoleon without looking toward superhuman sources, but I do not therefore receive those men as plenipotentiaries of God.

My second and principal reason for declining to pay Swedenborg the homage you think he deserves is the fact, that my admiration of that which is good and true in his writ-

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ings is held in check by my clear perception of much in them which is bad and false. You would have me divest myself of all preconceptions. This I am by no means at liberty to do. I bring to the reading of Swedenborg only the same mind which I have previously brought to the study of a confessedly previous revelation. If I cannot trust that mind's past operations, I cannot trust it for the future. Would you have me divest myself of the preconception that the earth is a spherical body revolving around the sun? I might as well and as easily do this as divest myself of the preconception that the 24th Chapter of St. Matthew teaches a doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ which Swedenborg denies. The same I may say of many other Scripture-certainties which I have obtained not by tradition nor by human teaching but by careful investigation and by demonstration of the spirit of truth. . . .

You insist that the question of Swedenborg's divine illumination is to be settled at the outset on its own merits. I object to this order of procedure. I find at the outset that he attempts to cashier Paul and supersede him. Paul's pretensions are as high as his. The very form and pressure of Swedenborg's claim bids me look well to Paul's claim; for if Swedenborg would have me lightly set aside pretensions to divine authority in one case, he teaches me to hold them loosely in all cases. The law favors possession. Paul is in possession of the field, and Swedenborg is the ejector. I insist then that the question to be settled at the outset is whether Paul was a true man or an impostor. Now I have long ago settled it in my mind that Christ revealed himself in Paul, and committed to him the dispensation of the everlasting gospel. I can truly say of Paul that I have found in his writings all the essential truths of Swedenborg and a great deal more; and I do not find in Paul the gross errors which I find in Swedenborg. Therefore in my view the balance is altogether in favor of Paul. . . .



## Swedenborgianism

As to the problem of Swedenborg's character and pretensions I do not feel bound to solve it. I can leave it to be solved at the day of judgment. I know that there are principalities and powers in the spiritual world that have immense intelligence combined with immense spiritual wickedness. I have had experience of their incantations. I have seen their influences bursting forth in Puseyism, in Fourierism, in Shakerism, in Millerism, in Mormonism, and I may say in Perfectionism. If I cannot exactly fathom these portents, I can turn from them to Christ and the apostles, whose voice I know, and thus relieve my conscience of perplexity. . . .

But the problem of Swedenborg may not be wholly inexplicable. It may be that he was actually introduced into the spiritual world, and that many of the things which he reports were objective realities; but that he was introduced only into that apartment called in the Bible "Hades," which is below the resurrection state, and that his theology is the theology of Hades. To my mind many circumstances indicate that this was the fact. I am sure he never saw the resurrection sphere, for he believes in no resurrection distinct from continued existence in Hades after death. He knows nothing of the judgment and resurrection at the second coming of Christ. He reports nothing of that church which lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years while the rest of the dead lived not. He says that the angels told him this and that, but almost never reports what the apostles and primitive believers told him. Yet their testimony would go further than that of legions of angels. Those whom he calls angels are only the ghosts of men, and men without names. The statements of such witnesses are not to be received without cross-questioning, and his witnesses are all beyond the reach of cross-questioning. But perhaps the most decisive proof that his clairvoyance was limited to Hades is the fact that all the heavens he saw, even the inmost, were subject to a measure



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of sin and suffering. Experience in Hades is a sublimated form of the Christian experience current in this world, an alternation of sinning and repenting, sadness and happiness. It is not resurrection experience.

The fact that Swedenborg saw the Godhead only in its unity, as it was seen under the Jewish dispensation, that he saw none but human angels, that he was in entire ignorance of the existence of the Devil, all tend to the same point and persuade me that, though he may have had real intercourse with the spiritual world and supposed he knew all about it, his range of acquaintance did not extend to ultimates in the direction either of good or evil. . . .

In all great outbursts from the spiritual world there is undoubtedly a confluence of good and evil. So I see heaven and hell coöperating in the development of Swedenborgianism. But I am convinced nevertheless that as a system it is from an infernal source; and if I am asked, what motive the Devil could have for constructing with so much pains-taking and seeming benevolence such a vast, complicated engine, I answer unhesitatingly, that he might destroy the Bible. That is the hook, and all the wisdom, morality and beauty that cover it are only the bait.

Yours respectfully,

JOHN H. NOYES.

This letter discouraged Professor Bush. His subsequent letters were written not in pursuance of his original attempt to convert me, but to complain of some articles on Swedenborg which I published in *The Perfectionist*. The first of these articles was a long one on Swedenborg's *Theory of the Internal Sense of Scripture*. The reader has seen the substance of it, and I will not reproduce it. The next, presenting Swedenborg's doctrine of the Godhead, is summarized below :

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The unity of the Godhead is as prominent an article in Swedenborg's creed as it is in that of the Unitarians. His doctrine is that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the soul, body and spirit of one person. In effect this doctrine denies not only the divinity but the existence of the Christ described in the Evangelists, for that Christ constantly and in various ways represented himself as a person distinct from the Father. Unitarianism proper, while it denies the divinity of Christ, still leaves him standing as the greatest of men, in some sense mediating between the rest of mankind and God. But Swedenborg takes him out of the way altogether by merging him in the only Jehovah. We have seen that Swedenborg annuls the commissions of the apostles. Who then is God's second? We hazard nothing in saying that it is Swedenborg himself. To him alone the arcana of both inner and outer universe were opened. To him was given the key of the internal sense by which a new Bible was ushered into the world. Can we doubt then that in his own view he occupies the place vacated by his annihilation of the Son as a separate person?

My next discussion in *The Perfectionist* concerned the second coming of Christ. I will reprint here only the concluding paragraphs:

"According to the extracts we have given from Swedenborg's writings (*Brief Exposition*, Sections 70, 73; *Heaven and Hell*, section 1; *Last Judgment*, section 45) the second coming of Christ was in fact nothing more than the advent of Swedenborgianism. Thus he says: 'That by the coming of the Lord is meant his coming in the Word, and at the same time the establishment of a New Church instead of the former, which is then brought to its consummation or end, evidently appears etc.' Subsequently he announces distinctly that he is the vehicle of the revelations necessary to the salvation of the world, and adds: 'That at this day such immediate revelation

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exists is because that is what is meant by the coming of our Lord.'

In our view there is no better test of a man's pretensions to Bible-knowledge than the answer he gives to the question, What think you of Christ's second coming? If he misses the truth on this point, we are satisfied that he has no clue to the labyrinth of prophecy, no sound knowledge of the spiritual history of the world, and no profound sympathy with Christ and the apostles. As biblical knowledge advances we may be sure that Swedenborg's theory of the second coming will be seen more and more clearly to be the seal of his imposture."

After this article I tried to hurry through and get out of the discussion. I made a brief statement of Swedenborg's theory of regeneration, Christian experience, the new covenant, and the resurrection, and concluded with the following summary of his views on sexual morality:

Exclusive marriage, essentially the same as that practised in this world, exists in heaven in contradiction of Christ's words. Matt. 22:30.

In his code of sexual morality for this world Swedenborg allows mistress-keeping in cases where it is not convenient for men to marry, and concubinage in cases where married men are not pleased with their wives. (*Conjugal Love*, sections 459, 460, 467-475.)

PROFESSOR BUSH TO NOYES

New York, January 24, 1846.

Dear Sir: . . .

I wish more particularly to request you to reconsider what you have said respecting Swedenborg's allowing of mistress-keeping. . . .

See if you have not conveyed a wrong impression. See if strict Christian equity does not require you to proffer some

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kind of amends to those of your readers (and I am one), who may feel deeply aggrieved by what they are fully satisfied is a groundless aspersion. If you are satisfied that you have spoken unadvisedly, I have every assurance that you will not shrink from a proper acknowledgment. At any rate I pray you will not leave it where it is. Tell your readers at least what he does say in its relation to the whole theme, that they may judge for themselves of the enormity.

Very respectfully yours,

GEORGE BUSH.

### SWEDENBORG ON MISTRESS-KEEPING AND CONCUBINAGE

NOYES IN *The Perfectionist* JANUARY 31, 1846

I have stated that Swedenborg "allows mistress-keeping in cases where it is not convenient for men to marry, and concubinage in cases where married men are not pleased with their wives." On account of the delicacy of the subject I have been unwilling to produce the proof. But there are so many denials of the facts, that it seems necessary to give our readers an opportunity of judging for themselves. . . . The proof, I fear, will be regarded as a heavy, disagreeable dose.<sup>1</sup>

Swedenborg seems not to have thought of providing for any interests but those of men. He leaves unmarried women without any reputable refuge corresponding to mistress-keeping, though they have less advantage than men in choosing their own time of marriage. He does not permit married women to provide themselves with paramours, though husbands are liable to as many disqualifications as wives. His plan necessarily involves the immolation of a large class of women to the lusts of the other sex. Even admitting that the interests of men in the cases he describes actually require

<sup>1</sup> Here Noyes presents extracts from *Conjugal Love*, sections 450, 451, 459, 462-476, upon which his statements were based.—G. W. N.



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mistress-keeping and concubinage, it may still be asked whether the interests of women do not forbid them.

Swedenborg is an instance of perversion of mind brought about by the worldly atmosphere in which he lived. The morality exhibited in the extracts we have presented is a morality prepared for kings, for noblemen, for cities. No man out of the sphere of court and city usages would ever have thought of such a sexual philosophy. In the discourse on concubinage will be found a clue to the secret influences that gave shape to Swedenborg's lucubrations. To prove that the spiritual effects of concubinage pass away and leave no harm after death he says: "That it is so I have heard from communication with some in the spiritual world, even from kings there, who in the natural world had been in concubinage from real and sufficient causes." Let it be remembered that Swedenborg was himself a nobleman, that he was high in honor with kings and courts, that he spent his life in great cities, and it will seem quite natural that he should make his sexual morality a "soft raiment fit for those in kings' houses."

### AMPHIBIOUS MORALITY

NOYES IN *The Circular* FEBRUARY 3, 1868

Christ was amphibious. He lived in this world and at the same time in the world of spirits. During his fast in the wilderness he had open intercourse with angels and devils. The scene on the Mount of Transfiguration shows that he was familiar with the Hadean heavens. He introduced his disciples to the souls of departed prophets. To Nicodemus he spoke of himself as the "Son of man which is in heaven," and professed to be able to tell him of "heavenly things" as well as "earthly things." Living thus in two worlds he propounded a scheme of sexual relations for each.

His scheme for this world enforced the marriage-relation in



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its fullest rigor. Instead of relaxing the conjugal system which he found among the Jews, he insisted on a higher standard of faithfulness between man and wife. His word was, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery," "Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." These are plain words, and Christ's theory of sexual morality for this world cannot be misunderstood.

His scheme for the heavenly world was scarcely less simple and intelligible. He said: "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that [other] world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." His last prayer for his disciples, that they "all might be one," and the communism of the day of Pentecost indicate what takes the place of marriage in the heavenly world.

Christ then, standing in two worlds, assigned to them opposite sexual conditions; and he reconciled those conditions in his own example by abstaining during his earthly life from marriage on the one hand and from extra-matrimonial freedom on the other. He "made himself a eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake."

For a contrast with this turn now to Swedenborg. He too professed to be amphibious. He said that he lived for twenty-six years in open intercourse with all the heavens and hells, conversing daily with angels, devils and the souls of the dead. Living thus in two worlds he also propounded a scheme of sexual relations for each.

For this world his doctrine was, that "the legitimate, just and sufficient causes" of divorce and concubinage were at least fifty. A man might put away his wife and take a concubine for

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scores of such causes as a bad breath or old age as well as for fornication.

For the other world his doctrine was that marriage was still the foundation of society. His saints and angels were devoted husbands and wives. He told about the courtships of heavenly lovers, and professed to have been present at their weddings. In short, marrying and giving in marriage were the principal bliss of his heavens.

But Swedenborg in his scheme for this world did not content himself with the largest liberty of divorce and concubinage for married men. He gave a supplementary license of select fornication to unmarried men who could not contain and could not conveniently marry. No toleration of fornication can be found in Christ's teachings nor in any part of the New Testament. Paul prescribed marriage as the only refuge for those who could not contain. Like Christ Paul abstained from marriage in deference to the superior claims of the heavenly life, but did not turn to fornication. Swedenborg abstained from marriage, but he did not make himself "a eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake." Mr. White, his biographer, cites the testimony of two witnesses, Tuxen and Robsahm, both intimates of Swedenborg, who separately alleged that at some period or periods of his career he kept a mistress.

Although marriage in heaven according to Swedenborg follows the fashion of this world in prescribing strict dualism and exclusiveness, it differs from earthly marriage in that it does not recognize any public law as its essential sanction, but is altogether an affair of affinities discoverable only through successive trials. "Separations take place," he says, "and afterwards new conjunctions with those who are similar and homogeneous, unless they had been provided on earth, which is done for those who from an early age have loved, have wished, and have asked of the Lord a legitimate and lovely connection with

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one, and have scorned and shunned wandering lusts." *Conjugial Love*, section 49.

To sum up, Swedenborg's scheme virtually dissolves most marriages on earth and casts distrust on all of them. At the same time it ties every man as by decree of eternal fate to one unknown woman, "with whom he may perpetually be more and more conjoined into one," and makes it his first duty to roam and try till he finds her. *Conjugial Love*, section 38.

## Chapter 19

### FREE LOVE

**S**WEDENBORG was not alone in his hostility to marriage. The socialistic innovators, whose experiments we have reviewed, attacked not merely the economic but also the sexual foundations of modern society.

The religious colonies that came early from Europe felt instinctively that marriage was antagonistic to communism. Partly for this reason and partly in the interest of a supposedly higher religious life the Shakers adopted celibacy as a cardinal principle. The Rappites too were originally celibate. Even after marriage was allowed in order that they might "raise their own members," sexual commerce beyond the requirements of reproduction was prohibited, and virginity was held to be more commendable than marriage. The Ephratists, the Zoarites and the Amana Society tolerated marriage, but looked upon it with disfavor.

Robert Owen did not attempt the immediate displacement of marriage. But he included marriage with irrational religion and private property as one of the "awful trinity" of man's oppressors, and contemplated its ultimate destruction. His son, Robert Dale Owen, was outspoken in his enmity to marriage, and became a leading advocate of free divorce. Both father and son were enthusiastic disciples of Modern Spiritualism, a religious cult of which Free Love was believed by many the social complement.

Certain groups of "antinomian Perfectionists" renounced marriage and mated by spiritual affinity.<sup>1</sup> Noyes and the Putney Perfectionists, as we have seen, held aloof from these groups, believing that marriage was ordained by God as the law of the apostasy and was not to be set aside until salvation from sin and the resurrection of the body had been attained.

The Mormons in 1843 adopted polygamy, which Noyes called a dilution of marriage.

Like Robert Owen, American Fourierists were cautious of im-

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, Chap. XIX.

## Free Love

mediate changes in the law of marriage. But Henry J. Raymond showed in his public debate with Horace Greeley that as a system Fourierism permitted "higher degrees of amorous freedom" after the human race had become regenerated by socialistic institutions.

The socialistic reformer whose teachings were the most highly subversive of marriage was Josiah Warren, inventor of the term "Individual Sovereignty." At Modern Times, Long Island, his final socialistic experiment, each member was supposed to know his or her best interests in the sexual relation as in everything else, and no questions were asked. It was here that Warren in 1851 enlisted Stephen Pearl Andrews to popularize the doctrine of Individual Sovereignty by a series of lectures and by a pamphlet distributed gratuitously. Among the converts were Dr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Nichols, water-cure specialists of New York City. They were publicity adepts and prepared themselves at Modern Times to broadcast the principle of Free Love based on Individual Sovereignty and Modern Spiritualism.

The essential connection between Free Love and Spiritualism is thus stated by C. M. Overton, editor of *The Social Revolutionist*, a Free Love journal:

"Free Love is a doctrine of Spiritualism. I say of Spiritualism, not of Spiritualists. Many recognize the facts of Spiritualism who know little of its philosophy. But will any intelligent Spiritualist deny that the concurrent testimony of the spheres proves that their inhabitants are controlled in their love relations not by arbitrary outside authority but by the law of attraction, affinity or Free Love? Is it not a conceded fact that the angels do not have to be hauled up before a magistrate to legalize their marriages? How supremely ridiculous the idea that the men and women of Paradise live together on the cat and dog principle because it wouldn't be respectable to separate! They are not so generous there as to sacrifice their individual happiness for the good of the community. They are not so senseless there as to stay together and scratch and pull hair from a sense of duty to their children or other members of the community, when these other members are doing the same thing from the same laudable motive! The fact that they break up false relations there and form new ones is as well established and is just as much a part of the Spiritual or Harmonic Philosophy as the doctrine of Endless Progression."

In 1852 the Nicholse joined with Andrews in establishing at Port Chester, New York, a Free Love School under the guise of a water-cure and vegetarian Medical College. It was suppressed by the authorities. Dr. Nichols then put forth a flowery prospectus



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of "The Institute of Desarrollo." This was to be based frankly on Individual Sovereignty, and was expected to garner all the results that had been vainly looked for in the Fourieristic Associations. A site was selected near Modern Times, the cellar dug, the foundation wall partly laid, when the plan was abandoned. Dr. Nichols explained that a campaign of education should precede practical attempts. To this he now addressed himself.

His first move was the establishment of a magazine called *Nichols' Journal*, in which Spiritualism, health and social relations were discussed.

Next he published a book of five hundred pages entitled *Esoteric Anthropology*. This, he prefaced, was "no book for the center-table, the library shelf, or the counter of a bookstore." It was a private treatise on physiology and health, written "not to get consultations but to prevent their necessity, not to attract patients but to keep them away." Free Love, though hinted, was not directly advocated. During 1853 and 1854 twenty-six thousand copies were sold.

To this great audience Dr. Nichols in 1854 introduced his second book entitled *Marriage*, in which he openly presented his threefold creed, Individual Sovereignty, Spiritualism, and Free Love. *Marriage* ran through three large editions during its first year. By the fall of 1854 Dr. Nichols' writings were circulating actively in every State of the Union, especially in the west.

So widespread was the popularity of these new doctrines that Dr. Nichols ventured upon overt acts in the full glare of publicity. With his former partner, Stephen Pearl Andrews, he instituted a series of "Sociables" in New York City, which were broken up by the police.

Dr. Nichols now found himself accepted as the prophet of a new age by scattered thousands eager to share in its benefits. How could he make his followers known to each other and commence the realization of their dream? The "spirits," by whose illumination he says he had written his books, came again to his aid. They directed the formation of a "Protective Union." A Central Bureau was established in New York City with Dr. Nichols as Secretary. All who wished to associate were enrolled as members and received a printed list of names and addresses. Thus a tempting opportunity was offered to affinity-hunters.

Early in 1856 Dr. Nichols began to see signs of a hurricane arising from the zephyr he had sown. Sensational charges were made in the newspapers and he found it necessary to issue a statement in his own defense. Hitherto no oath of secrecy had been exacted

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from members, but now a circular was sent out prescribing a Declaration of Principles and secrecy of the most guarded kind. The Central Bureau was removed to Cincinnati away from the hostile press of the east and nearer the main body of its constituents. Dr. Nichols began to hint in the *Journal* that sexual commerce should be limited to propagation. In May 1856 he launched a "Harmonic Home" called Memnonia at Yellow Springs, Ohio. But he gave notice in the *Social Revolutionist*, that Memnonia would be "provisionally and necessarily a despotism," as wise and benevolent as circumstances would permit.

But the western disciples of Dr. Nichols, trained by him in Individual Sovereignty, could brook no control. They turned their backs on Memnonia, and found a gathering-point at Berlin Heights, a small town near Cleveland, Ohio, where Individual Sovereignty, Spiritualism and Free Love were smoldering and could easily be fanned into flame.

Memnonia was Dr. Nichols' last attempt at social reconstruction. After its failure, which was complete, Dr. and Mrs. Nichols recanted their errors to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati and were received into the Catholic Church.

With the exit of Dr. Nichols the "Nicolaitan doctrine," as it was called by Noyes in allusion to the doctrine which according to Revelation 2: 15 Christ "hated," entered upon its final phase. The Rising Star Association of Darke County, Ohio, believing that a large organization necessarily infringed the rights of the individual, had striven since August 1853 to realize Individual Sovereignty in a small group with the hope that later a federation of small groups could safely be effected. In the spring of 1857 this Association removed from Darke County to Berlin Heights, and its press, *The Social Revolutionist*, having taken over the subscription-list of *Nichols' Monthly*, became the organ of fierce Spiritualistic Free Lovers eager for advance on a large scale. A convention was held at Berlin Heights in the fall of 1856, another in the fall of 1857. The next year thirty householders pledged themselves to dispose of their property and remove to Berlin Heights as soon as practicable. But the public had become aroused. *The Social Revolutionist* for November 1857 was seized and burnt by a mob, and the number for January 1858 was the last. After this, though many Spiritualistic Free Lovers continued to live at Berlin Heights, the Free Love movement which had centered there fell into complete disorganization.

Reviewing the fruits of Berlin Heights Free Love a prominent convert asserted that among less than one hundred persons there

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were several suicides; that one man was in prison charged with murdering his wife's sister, with whom he had been intimate; that three-quarters of the married couples had been separated and their families broken up; that many children born in Free Love had been forsaken; and that venereal disease had become alarmingly prevalent.

### NOYES'S REPUDIATION OF THE TERM "FREE LOVE"

*The Circular* MARCH 21, 1870

This terrible combination of two good ideas, freedom and love, was first used by Oneida Community writers about twenty-one years ago, and probably originated with them. It was however soon taken up by a different class of persons scattered about the country, and has become the name of a form of society with which we have no affinity. Therefore we think it our duty to tell what meaning we attached to the phrase and why we are unwilling at present to accept it as a designation of our social system.

The essential differences between marriage and Free Love may be stated thus:

Marriage is a permanent union; Free Love a temporary flirtation.

Marriage brings communism of property; Free Love is a hireling system.

Marriage makes a man responsible for his acts to a woman; Free Love allows him to impose his will and go his way without responsibility.

Marriage provides for the maintenance and education of children; Free Love ignores children and leaves them to chance.

In respect to every one of these points we stand with marriage. Free Love with us does not mean freedom to love today and leave tomorrow; nor freedom to take a woman's person

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and keep our property to ourselves; nor freedom to freight a woman with our offspring and send her down stream without care or help; nor freedom to beget children and leave them to the street and the poor-house.

Our Communities are as distinctly bounded and separated from outside society as ordinary families; the tie that binds us together is as permanent and sacred to say the least as that of marriage, for it is our religion; we receive no new members (except by mistake) who do not give heart and hand to the Community for life and forever. Whoever will take the trouble to follow our track from the beginning will find no forsaken women or children by the way.

## Chapter 20

### PRECURSORS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

IN THE spring of 1846 Noyes "saw many reasons for thinking that the time had come to take the final step out of marriage." The religious principles upon which the new social order was to rest had been worked out during the twelve years from 1834 to 1846. Published originally as scattered articles in *The Witness* and *The Perfectionist*, these principles were collected in May 1847 into a single volume, *The Berean*.

During the same period the theory of Bible Communism had been elaborated. Though not published until 1849 it was well understood and accepted by the central members of the Putney Community.

The nucleus of Perfectionists at Putney had been associated in religious faith for eleven years. They had found in Noyes a strong leader of demonstrated ability, and by the spring of 1845 had advanced toward external union as far as communism of property.

The nominal Perfectionists throughout the country had been sifted by means of the paper and personal acquaintance until those who acknowledged Noyes's divinely appointed leadership spiritual and temporal stood clearly distinct from those who did not.

The Belchertown imbroglio had strengthened the conviction that Bible Communism, when at last it should come, must be closely knit, sharply set off from the world, not liable to the disturbing influence of outside peripatetic preachers.

Plainness of speech, always practised by Noyes, was rapidly developing into "mutual criticism," a powerful yet harmonizing means of government.

Male Continence, the physiological basis of Complex Marriage, after two years' proof had become the unquestioned rule of sexual conduct.

Noyes had definitely turned away from the expansive procedure of Owen and Fourier. In February 1846 he wrote: "I am every day more persuaded, that to build here slowly and silently a little



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Community in which the true gospel shall be thoroughly embodied will tell more effectually on the interests of God and man than to push forward extensive organizations at first."

The Putney Community was in Noyes's view a moral oasis, a place to shelter and sustain the new social life during infancy. "We have overcome many of the difficulties," he wrote to G. W. Robinson, "with which Satan besets the path of believers, and are growing in confidence, and love, and assurance that God will give us the kingdom. What if there is not another bright spot in the wide world, and what if this is a very small one? Turn your eye toward it when you are tired of looking into chaos, and you will catch a glimpse of a better world." And Harriet Skinner in "A Sober Statement of Truth" published in March 1846 declared: "The improvement that has been made among us the past winter is so palpable and universal that I cannot forbear acknowledging it. There has been a marked increase of union. The grim cowards Accusation and Despondency, that so terribly harass the lonely pilgrim, fly from our closed ranks, and in their place come Innocence, Courage and Strength."

In the above respects all was in readiness for Complex Marriage. But the woman who was to lead off with Noyes in the daring adventure remained still in doubt.

Noyes had believed Abigail Merwin his predestined mate.<sup>1</sup> She was his first convert, and had stood bravely by him through his hardest battle. She had opened to him the door of the Free Church and the city of New Haven. But she had revolted against the mysticism and antinomianism that then prevailed among Perfectionists, and had returned to the church. Noyes had tried desperately to win her back. Despite his entreaty she had married another. In his anguish he had clutched at the theory of Complex Marriage, but this, he thought, applied only in heaven. He had followed her to Ithaca to recall her to the post she had deserted. Then the fraudulent, unexpected publication of his theory had given a providential signal, he thought, for Complex Marriage soon on earth. Almost immediately word had come that she had separated from her husband, and had returned to her father's home. He had sent her a message through Harrison that, if she would not take her appointed place, some other woman would—soon. She had ignored the summons, and he had married Harriet A. Holton, expressly reserving however his right to introduce Complex Marriage at his discretion on earth. Five years later Abigail's husband had died.

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes*, pp. 351-357.

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Cragin, who sent this information in a letter dated December 8, 1845, was on a missionary journey near Abigail's home. It is extremely probable that here is a link of secret history—another attempt on the part of Noyes to present his claim. But she was obdurate. Her answer must have been, as when in 1851 a similar attempt was made, that the Kingdom of God had not come, that marriage was not abolished, that if Mr. Noyes loved her as represented it was a sin. When she failed him at first, Noyes had turned to Harriet A. Holton. When she failed him now, he turned to Mary E. Cragin. He still hoped to draw Abigail into the widening Community vortex. Several times, as the years passed, she came unexpectedly upon the scene, but she never joined. As a leading actor in the revolutionary drama she now made her final exit.<sup>1</sup>

The rehabilitation of Mrs. Cragin was completed in the fall and winter of 1845-6. Since 1840, when she came to Putney, she had been under criticism, and in her despair had been tempted to suicide. Noyes and his wife had tried to help her, but she still languished in the "Slough of Despond." During a visit of Smith to Putney in November 1845 Noyes drew up a paper apportioning the guilt for their old offense, and obtained the hearty written acceptance of Smith and Mrs. Cragin. This lifted the burden of remorse, and Noyes's wife, taking Mrs. Cragin by the hand in loving companionship, led her step by step out of the dark valley. So it came about that Mrs. Cragin was prepared to play the part which Noyes had supposed God designed for Abigail Merwin.

There was still a complete blockade. Noyes had many times curbed impatient disciples by asserting that the resurrection of the body must precede Complex Marriage. A long warfare against disease had been waged in the Putney Community, faith-cures so-called had become increasingly frequent, and a climax had been reached in the fall of 1845 when Noyes himself was cured, miraculously he believed, of a menacing throat trouble of three years' standing. But nothing that could be accepted as a resurrection of the body had been attained. Reconnoitring the whole position from his new standpoint Noyes perceived for the first time that there was an interaction between life and environment; that increased life tended to improved environment, and improved environment to increased life. He therefore announced his belief that Complex Marriage was one of the means by which the resurrection power would be let into the world.

<sup>1</sup> Abigail died February 4, 1899, at the age of 96 years, surviving Noyes by 13 years.—G. W. N.

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But Noyes might not even then have embarked on his perilous voyage, had not events in the outside world simultaneously assumed a portentous aspect. It was this that pushed him off the wharf. Fourierism with its attempt to base religion on socialism instead of socialism on religion, Swedenborgianism with its nullification of the Bible and its sanction of concubinage and roaming for mates, Modern Spiritualism with its substitution of ancestor and sub-conscious self-worship for the worship of God, Individual Sovereignty with its industrial and social anarchy, Free Love with its default in responsibility for women and children were to Noyes the point for point antithesis of Bible Communism; and when in the spring of 1846 the world seemed about to be overwhelmed by the junction and rush of these, his most dreaded foes, he became convinced that the time had come to launch his own complete social scheme. "We kept the law until 1846," he wrote to Hepworth Dixon in 1867. "We withstood Fourierism and Swedenborgianism in their risings. We have withstood Berlin Heights Free Love steadily until this day. In view of these facts I maintain that the Putney Community instead of causing the flood built the ark, and that it set about the work not a moment too soon."

## Chapter 21

### BEGINNINGS OF COMPLEX MARRIAGE

FROM this time there was an element of "Bible secretiveness" in the development of Complex Marriage. Bible secretiveness according to Noyes would not permit making a false statement, but it would permit withholding facts from inferiors. Christ and Paul delivered their message truthfully. But Christ came "like a thief in the night;" he spoke to the multitude in parables; he charged the people not to make him known; he said to his disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." So Paul to a higher class in the Primitive Church spoke wisdom too advanced for "babes in Christ."

Noyes also delivered his message with frankness from the beginning. He avowed his principles in print nine years before he put them to practice. The step from principles to practice, when it was made, was an easy inference from his published writings. After the migration to Oneida he placed these publications in the hands of the Governor of the State, the local authorities and other prominent persons. He did not withhold more particular information from sincere inquirers. But he did not promulgate views too advanced for his hearers, nor unseasonably thrust himself upon the public, nor go out of his way to put weapons into his enemies' hands.

Noyes tolerated no secretiveness toward superiors. He believed that progress and safety depended upon unbroken communication with God. To this end he thought every person should have counselors superior to himself from whom he kept no secrets. In the Oneida Community Noyes himself and the central members were a clearing house for secrets.

While secretiveness was sometimes justifiable, duplicity never. Bible secretiveness left a picture incomplete but single-faced and true.



## Beginnings of Complex Marriage

MARY E. CRAGIN'S JOURNAL

January 1846.—At the request of Mr. Noyes I now commence a journal of what has taken place among us of late with regard to the increase of brotherly love.

This month Mr. Cragin left for Belchertown and Southampton, not intending to stay long. He did not go to Southampton as we expected, but went to visit the Prescott sisters. While absent he wrote a letter to Mrs. Harriet A. Noyes expressing his love for her as a sister in Christ. This letter, together with his visit to Prescott, gave rise to some remarks about his partiality for women. Mr. Noyes addressed a letter of friendly caution to him, in which he spoke approvingly of his love for the feminine character, but reminded him that such men as Dr. Gridley and Charles Mead were watching him with an evil eye. Mrs. Noyes was brought into tribulation by the remarks of some about Mr. Cragin's letter, and when Mr. Noyes talked with her upon the subject she made known to him her love for Mr. Cragin. Mr. Noyes approved of her feelings, and appointed a meeting of the four, Mr. and Mrs. Noyes, Mr. and Mrs. Cragin. We met one Saturday evening about the middle of the month. Mr. Noyes requested Mr. Cragin to read the letter of counsel referred to, and added words of caution which Mr. Cragin confessed were needed. Mr. Noyes said this was the negative side of the subject; we would now turn to the positive side. He then called upon Mrs. Noyes to speak. She said that she was pleased by Mr. Cragin's letter, and that her heart was drawn out toward him by it. Mr. Cragin confessed a similar feeling toward her, which prompted the letter. Mr. Noyes then asked Mr. Cragin's leave to tell me that he loved me. Mr. Cragin heartily consented. I said that I had loved Mr. Noyes so much that I feared he would find it out; for I was not certain, my awe of him was such, that he wanted me to love



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him so much. After these avowals we considered ourselves engaged to each other, expecting to live in all conformity to the laws of this world until the time arrives for the consummation of our union. The effect was most refreshing to our spirits. We have formed a circle which it is not easy for the Devil to break. We find this evidence that our love is of God: it is destitute of exclusiveness, each one rejoicing in the happiness of the others.

A few days after this meeting Mr. Noyes said that he wanted to extend the blessing to all as fast as they were able to receive it. He talked with Harriet Skinner, and found her nearer ripe for a community of hearts than he had supposed. Also at an incidental interview Mr. Miller gave a satisfactory testimony.

Mr. Noyes gave a lecture upon the proper bounds of demonstrations of love between the sexes. He cut off kissing and everything which would be considered as leaning toward licentiousness.

March 15.—Mr. and Mrs. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Skinner, Mr. and Mrs. Noyes, and Mr. and Mrs. Cragin met at Mr. Miller's. Mr. Noyes spoke of Mr. Miller's testimony at the printing-office, and remarked upon the increasing tendency to unity among us. He then said that a nucleus must be formed in order to draw the others in; and he asked whether, if he should find it necessary to commence, there was sufficient confidence in him to prevent evil surmisings and jealousies. An expression was obtained from each one, and the conclusion was unanimous that Mr. Noyes as the head and pilot in this matter had a claim on our confidence and an undoubted right to do as he pleased.

Charlotte said at the meeting that her husband, she thought, did not love her so well as formerly. Mr. Noyes read to us the fourth chapter of First Thessalonians, dwelling with emphasis upon the sixth verse: "That no man go beyond and defraud his

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brother in any matter." I was brought into considerable tribulation by a spirit which accused me of being the occasion of Charlotte's difficulties. I will relate the particulars: Last June Mr. Smith of Rondout came to Putney to see Mr. Noyes. On hearing of his arrival I was plunged into distress. My husband was gone, and I felt desolate and wretched. Mr. Miller happened to call, and his sympathies were drawn out in my behalf. He acted the part of a brother toward me through all my tribulation, for which I felt very grateful. As I supposed that he still retained the exclusive affection for Charlotte which I knew he once had, I was not so much on my guard as I should have been. This winter some trifling familiarities took place, which gave me uneasiness. I feared that I had unconsciously attracted him, and I opened my heart to my husband for advice and rebuke if I needed it. I also told Mrs. Noyes, from whom I have no secrets. Mr. Noyes called to give us advice. He had noticed how things were going. He did not condemn any one, but wished such intimacies put an end to before they went too far. I had the night before sent word to Mr. Miller by Mr. Cragin, requesting him to treat me with coolness and reserve for his own sake and Charlotte's and mine. Mr. Noyes said I must tell Mr. Miller myself, if it was necessary. In the afternoon Mr. Cragin went up to see Charlotte. While he was gone Mr. Miller, who had previously called to talk with us when Mr. Cragin was at home but had been interrupted, came in. He said that once he had felt disposed to see and talk about my faults, but that his feelings had changed; that he had a strong attachment for me, stronger than for any woman in the Community. I was surprised at this, and felt full of zeal to plead Charlotte's cause. I told him that I would not do anything that looked like defrauding her, and that I would seek her happiness before my own, because I considered her more worthy. He left, and I took the first opportunity of relating what had passed to my

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husband and Mr. and Mrs. Noyes. The next day in a conversation with Mr. Noyes at which Charlotte was present Mr. Miller said that I misunderstood him. There the matter rests until all parties can be heard in their own defense.

March 22.—An interview took place between Messrs. Noyes, Miller, Skinner and Cragin with their wives at Mr. Noyes's house. Mr. Noyes remarked that he hoped we had come together for peace and not for war. He then requested Mr. Miller to commence the conversation. This Mr. Miller declined to do, wishing me to bring forward my charges against him. It was finally settled that I should state the conversation which took place on the previous Wednesday, which I did. Mr. Miller said that I correctly stated it, but he insisted with much warmth that in his declaration of attachment to me he meant of course to except his wife. This seemed to be the point at issue between us. In reply to my defense of Charlotte that afternoon he had said nothing that looked like surprise at my having received the impression I did. Mr. Noyes labored to convince him that he had been imprudent in his course toward me, particularly in leaving that expression of attachment so unguarded. Mr. Miller again and again disclaimed all intention of doing wrong, of which no one accused him. Charlotte was much distressed that I should have received such an impression from what he said, and I was distressed that I could not conscientiously fully acquit him of having defrauded Charlotte for my sake. Finally Mr. Miller acknowledged that he might have been imprudent, and Charlotte said she thought her mind would become calm. So we parted. The next day Mr. Cragin tendered his sympathies to Mr. Miller, and begged him not to be so sensitive, assuring him that we all loved him and that what had taken place was an external affair.

March 24.—Mr. Miller wrote a letter to Mr. Noyes in which he fully and heartily sanctioned Mr. Noyes's course with

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him and acknowledged his imprudence in full. Charlotte remains distressed. Alas! That I should be an apple of discord in a family to whom I am under such untold obligation! But this seems to be my fate.

March 25.—Mr. Noyes called to state Mr. Miller's opinion of a remark which I made to him on the evening of our meeting, which was this: I said to Mr. Miller that I had not loved him, that I only felt grateful to him for his partiality to me. I felt as though I had not acknowledged enough as soon as I had said it, but did not know how then to alter it. I was irritated by what he had said just before about my having made an avowal of love to him, which I did not think I ever had. However the truth is that I did love him more than I was aware. I still love Mr. Miller as well as ever, but with a firm determination to infringe on no one's rights. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." I will just add that I think Charlotte has not been jealous of me without a cause.

### MY FIRST ACT IN SEXUAL FREEDOM

BY J. H. NOYES

One evening in May 1846 Mrs. Cragin and I went for a stroll. Coming to a lonely place we sat on a rock by the roadside and talked. All the circumstances invited advance in freedom, and yielding to the impulse upon me I took some personal liberties. The temptation to go further was tremendous. But at this point came serious thoughts. I stopped and revolved in mind as before God what to do. I said to myself, "I will not steal." After a moment we arose and went toward home. On the way we lingered. But I said, "No, I am going home to report what we have done." On reaching Mr. Cragin's house I called a meeting of the four. A searching talk ensued. Mr. Cragin at first was tempted to think that I was following the course of Abram C. Smith, but he finally recognized the dif-



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ference and gave judgment of approval. My wife promptly expressed her entire sanction. The last part of the interview was as amicable and happy as a wedding, and the consequence was that we gave each other full liberty.

NOYES TO HARRIET H. SKINNER

[About] August 1, 1846.

"He that doubteth is damned if he eat." Mr. Miller doubteth. His last position in conversation with me was that he would not do again what he did on the road from Clarendon. He stands opposing my theory and withholding submission. Yet he is availing himself of the privileges of my theory. He embraced Mrs. Cragin last evening. What advances he is making to you I know not. But I wish you to be on your guard. You must tell him you will not allow him to do anything which he thinks is wrong and will be ashamed of afterwards, for to him such things are licentious. I cannot go along with him until he has decisively adopted our principles and has put himself wholly into my hands. He will need much discipline, and he has never yet shown that he knew the value of discipline. He will need to be instructed in regard to secretiveness and the law in relation to propagation before he can safely be trusted with liberty. But in his present spirit and position I cannot instruct him. I wish you therefore to hold yourself aloof from him, or at most to coquette with him, and not allow him to feel free with you until he openly avows our principles and submits to my instructions.

J. H. N.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, August 18, 1846.

*Dear Brother Noyes: . . .*

I came into the store, and after praying earnestly that God would show me his will on the subject of our conversation I



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opened the Bible to these verses: "For we write none other things unto you than what ye read and acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; as also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." This seems to me to be plainly the manifestation of the will of God. As such I am willing to receive it, and follow the leading of his spirit through you without questioning or knowing why it is so. I believe that God is able and willing to show me the whole truth on this subject in due time, and I will wait patiently.

Your whole past life has been such as to inspire me with confidence. I can point to no one act which I do not think was right and directed by the spirit of God. In all my past difficulties I can plainly see the hand of God directing them for my good.

Yours in sincerity,

J. R. MILLER.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO JOHN R. MILLER AT BOSTON

Putney, September 17, 1846.

*Dear Brother:*

Don't, I pray, expect ready wit or anything else but commonplace sayings, written crookedly too, for I have little George on my lap assisting in his way, and John, who has just taken a fit of jealousy, pulling me to take him up too. However I am determined to write a little, if it is only to tell you that I love you some too, and I am confident that you will yet come out bright and happy and be able to say that you count your greatest trials as your greatest reasons for rejoicing, inasmuch as they will yield the most fruit. Doubtless you are enjoying yourself as well as you can considering you have left your heart behind you. I only hope that you want to see

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us as much as we want to see you. Georgy will not let me write any longer.

Yours affectionately,

M. E. CRAGIN.

JOHN R. MILLER TO HENRY W. BURNHAM

Putney, October 28, 1846.

*Dear Brother Burnham:*

. . . I never loved you, never felt so near to you as I do now. If you are going through the same sufferings that I have been through, I know how to sympathize. . . .

If God calls us to suffer, we must learn to rejoice in it. . . . We may not always see at the time why it is that God calls us thus to separate from things we hold dear. But I can now see that all the sufferings I have been through for the past summer have been for my everlasting good. I could never have gained such a victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil without it, and never should have had this experience if it had not been for Brother Noyes. I thought a good many times, "These are hard sayings; who can hear them?" And have been ready to go back into Egypt. But when I have come out from under the Devil's magnetism into the glorious sunlight of heaven, I have seen that it was not only the best thing that could be done, but the only thing to remedy the evil. I had an immense amount of worldly wisdom to be purged out before I could be brought into perfect fellowship with Christ. The great question was, what will the world think of this? But I have learned that to the children of God the question and the only question is, what will my Father think of this? And when we have once learned his will, the world is nothing more to us than if we were the inhabitants of some other planet.

It may seem to us that the course in which the spirit leads

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will bring us to ruin. But is not he, without whose notice a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, able to uphold us if we put our trust in him?

We should keep distinctly in mind that nothing is of any value to us that is not valuable to God. I say then, Away with everything else, the sooner the better. If I am going to buy goods, I do not want my pocket-book filled with good bills and counterfeit together. I want none but what are current in market. And I want nothing about me but what will pass in the market of heaven. . . .

When I have been led to doubt and hesitate about what we were doing, God has shown me his will as plainly as if I had heard a voice from heaven saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." When I have looked back, all has been darkness and misery, but when I have gone forward in the course God has marked out, my heart has been filled with the peace and happiness of heaven. . . .

Yours affectionately,

J. R. MILLER.

### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

ABOUT NOVEMBER 1, 1846

We, the undersigned, hold the following principles as the basis of our social union:

1. All individual proprietorship either of persons or things is surrendered, and absolute community of interests takes the place of the laws and fashions which preside over property and family relations in the world.

2. God as the ultimate and absolute owner of our persons and possessions is installed as the director of our combinations and the distributor of property. His spirit is our supreme regulator.

## The Putney Community

3. John H. Noyes is the father and overseer whom the Holy Ghost has set over the family thus constituted. To John H. Noyes as such we submit ourselves in all things spiritual and temporal, appealing from his decisions only to the spirit of God, and that without disputing.

We pledge ourselves to these principles without reserve; and if we fall away from them, let God and our signatures be witnesses against us.

GEO. CRAGIN.  
HARRIET A. NOYES.  
CHARLOTTE A. MILLER.  
HARRIET H. SKINNER.  
MARY E. CRAGIN.  
JOHN L. SKINNER.  
JOHN R. MILLER.

On November 4, 1846, the Putney Perfectionists carried through a consolidation of households. Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Noyes moved into the Campbell house with Mr. and Mrs. Cragin and William H. Woolworth. At the same time the Skinners, Millers and Leonards took possession of the Noyes homestead. J. H. Noyes's house was not occupied this winter. "For want of better names," wrote Harriet Skinner, "the Campbell house came to be known as the Lower House, and the Noyes homestead as the Upper House." This consolidation implied greater freedom in the development of Complex Marriage.

The night before the move the Skinners gave a party at which all were present. Miller wrote of it to Mrs. Polly Noyes: "The evening till about nine o'clock was spent in reading and conversation. It was then proposed that Mr. Skinner should make a speech on the occasion of leaving the J. H. Noyes house. This proposal called out a speech from every one present. There was much glorious testimony of the love and union that exists among us. At eleven o'clock we returned to our homes."

## Beginnings of Complex Marriage

LINES WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF RECEIVING MR. AND  
MRS. NOYES AS MEMBERS OF OUR HOUSEHOLD

BY MARY E. CRAGIN

Welcome! thrice welcome to our home!  
Within our breasts there stands enshrined  
A love which bids thee never roam,  
But in our hearts thy dwelling find.

For thou hast taught our erring feet  
To walk in wisdom's narrow way;  
Awakened us from error's sleep,  
And shed truth's light o'er all our way.

Thou art our shepherd! and dost keep  
An ever watchful jealous care  
Within thy fold among thy sheep.  
No subtle foe can enter there.

Thou art our lion! and canst rend  
The wolves which fain would drink our blood.  
To thee earth's haughtiest sons shall bend,  
And thou shalt be approved of God.

Thou art our lamb! In gentlest strains  
Thou speakest comfort to our hearts,  
When writhing 'neath those needful pains  
Which seem to rend our souls apart.

Thou art our lover! From thy heart  
A tide of living healthful love  
Rolls o'er us, and makes us a part  
Of the blest family above.



## The Putney Community

And she, thy meek and gentle wife,  
Stands ever ready by thy side  
To help thee in the arduous strife.  
She is our sister, friend and guide.

Ye've left your quiet, happy home  
To come and dwell awhile with us  
Within this plain, old-fashioned dome  
From motives that but few would guess.

'Tis the same spirit brings you here  
Brought the Redeemer from the skies.  
His image doth in you appear,  
And this is His self-sacrifice.

God will reward your deeds of love,  
And when ye seek to enter heaven,  
His faithfulness to you he'll prove.  
"Abundant entrance" will be given.

November 1st, 1846.

Of the move Harriet Skinner writes to her mother: "John says that we up here must contrive to present an extraordinary weight of attraction or we shall not draw them up that hill very often this winter, especially as they have everything agreeable to keep them at home. I told him I wished the work-shop was up here. You don't know how he does luxuriate in Mr. Woolworth's magazine of tools. It was proposed also to keep the apples up here, and that Mr. Miller should invariably take *The Courier* from the post-office and bring it home before John had a chance to see it. What more attractions we can muster do let us know, for I will go far and near and spend my last farthing."

JOHN R. MILLER TO MRS. POLLY NOYES

Putney, November 5, 1846.

*Dear Mrs. Noyes:*

I never felt such a love for all the household of God as I have lately. I have had many trials the past summer, but every

## Beginnings of Complex Marriage

wave that has dashed against the ship has driven it nearer the shore of eternal rest. I feel now that my hope is truly an anchor to the soul, which the world and the Devil cannot move. . . . I wish to be nothing but a tool in God's hands to be used in any way that shall best promote his honor and glory, and my prayer is that I may never be released from trials and sufferings until every thought and feeling shall be brought into obedience to his will. I rejoice, yea and will rejoice in God's dealings with me. . . . The spirit of God is a two-edged sword, which I believe has been put into John's hands to separate me from every earthly tie, and faithfully does he fulfill the duties of his office.

Yours affectionately,

J. R. MILLER.

### MARY E. CRAGIN'S JOURNAL

February 12, 1847.—I met Mr. Miller in company with Mr. and Mrs. Noyes, Mrs. Miller and Mr. Cragin. I told him that I was desirous of entering into partnership with him upon certain conditions, which were these: his full and hearty consent that Mr. Noyes should be a third party to our union, that we should keep in open and direct communication with him, relying on his honor and generosity to teach us how to love each other in that way which would be the most improving to our characters and tend to make us the happiest.

The Putney Perfectionists were accustomed to meet every Sunday forenoon at the Chapel. Noyes usually took the lead, and others spoke as they felt inclined. After meeting they assembled at one of the houses for what they called a "national dinner."

There was another consolidation of households at the end of March 1847. The Noyes, Cragin, Skinner and Miller families occupied the Noyes homestead, Locust Grove, while the Leonards moved into the Campbell house with Woolworth. Thus the four

## The Putney Community

principal families of the Putney Community united into a single household.

Burnham was invited early in April to come from Belchertown with his wife and occupy J. H. Noyes's house, a privilege for which he felt "inexpressible gratitude."

After this consolidation the families at the Noyes homestead began having a daily evening meeting at eight o'clock.

## Chapter 22

### DIVULGING THE SECRET

IT WAS during this winter of 1846-7, while Complex Marriage was being extended in strict confidence through the circle of Perfectionists at Putney, that Noyes, availing himself of what he thought a providential opportunity, revealed the facts to a small number of selected Perfectionists abroad.

WILLIAM H. COOK TO NOYES

Syracuse, New York, November 12, 1846.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

For some time past I have been thinking of writing to you about things in this place. There seems for the first time to be a breaking of ground in Syracuse on the subject of holiness. . . . I wish you were here. I think it would be a profitable visit to you to come and remain with us for some time; and think if you could remove your press to this place it would do better.

I have had the former conduct of Gatesites to contend with, but think its influence is destroyed. E—— S—— alone has to answer for this. His name is stench in this community as a religionist. Brother Wilder has been with us a few days, and would have been glad to speak to us in public; but I thought he was not the man, and as things here are now right we want to keep them so. If you will call and see us, I think a foundation can be laid that will tell in future ages. My course has been shielded, perhaps too much so, but I have not suffered so many things in vain.

## The Putney Community

I commend the course you have taken thus far, and can see the cause of holiness standing clear from all the fogs with which it would have been encumbered, had you not pursued the straight-ahead, determined course you have done. I say these things not by way of flattery, but because it is due to you to say thus much; and may the Lord in his goodness spare you many years to behold the glorious results of your untiring efforts.

Brothers Foot, Hatch and others have formed a sort of organization. What it will amount to I do not know, but hope for the best.

And now in conclusion will only say, that we want very much to see Brother Noyes. We do not wish to be left to the mercies of neophytes. Send us an experienced workman, one that needeth not be ashamed.

Your Brother,

WM. H. COOK.

P. S. My love to Cragin, your brother and others. Let us hear from you.

### THE SYRACUSE AND BELCHERTOWN EXPEDITION

PAPER BY NOYES ABOUT JANUARY 25, 1847

On reaching Syracuse we sought out Brother Cook, and were soon established at his house. And here at the outset I will answer the question, "What do you think of Brother Cook?" I think well of him; much better than I expected to. . . . He was one of the foremost in the fiery Perfectionism of 1834-5, but I think he steered through the perils of that time more skilfully than many. He escaped licentiousness, and manifested a spirit of discrimination and vigorous severity in the case of E—— S——, which pleased me at the time and which has evidently prepared him to appreciate my dealings



## Divulging the Secret

with Boyle and others. He has been reduced to order and sobriety by seeing the results of wild-fire, and probably also by being brought under the discipline of regular business. He is restive under the restraints of his situation, but I told him that I thought he was in the best place for his temperament. God can take care of him better where he is than in a life of wandering and excitement. He is a man of good talents; has the true western fire. He reminds me continually of Chauncey Dutton. He has as much imagination and power, and more judgment. He is frank, independent, lively, generous, a good sociable fellow. He improves by acquaintance. His talent for business is certainly wonderful. Many times I wished Brother Miller were with me. I think there will be a great sympathy between them.

The next day after our arrival Cook took us to Salina to see the salt springs and works, and on our way introduced us to "Mother Campbell," a fat, ignorant old woman, who has some reputation among Perfectionists in that region. I was forced somewhat reluctantly to resist her dogmatical testimony about "seeing no evil," and she took fire immediately. Thereupon I lashed her severely and left her in a very sore state. Brother Cook was somewhat tried by this affair, but soon came to the conclusion that I did the right thing. On the way back we called on Mrs. Waggoner, a sister of Cook's wife, and had a good talk.

In the afternoon Mary Mabie, another sister of Cook's wife, called upon us. I became acquainted with her in the city of New York in 1837, and was glad to meet her again. We talked over old times with great zest, and had a hearty laugh at Jarvis Rider's broad-brimmed hat. Mary is a lovely girl and faithful, I think, to the gospel. She gave up work and devoted her time to us during our whole visit at Syracuse.

The events of the remainder of this week, though interest-

## The Putney Community

ing and profitable, were not prominent enough to deserve a particular narration. I shall dispose of them summarily. We spent one day at Mrs. Waggoner's. I had much conversation with the three sisters and with Cook's mother. My endeavor was to elevate their views of true holiness, to commend love, and make them jealous and discriminating in respect to fellowship. I gave them a portraiture of our society at Putney which charmed them exceedingly. Mrs. Cook was brought to a crisis of conviction and a new experience which will be a great benefit to her. Her husband told me that she had assumed a new character under my influence. . . .

I had several long conversations with Cook. Sometimes we sat talking till past midnight. As we became acquainted I opened my heart to him till at last he clearly saw my entire position. He met the disclosure with the utmost cordiality. His mind and heart expanded as rapidly and visibly as Burnham's did when we opened his eyes. I convinced him that my ambition was not selfish. He was prepared by his relationship with Hiram Sheldon (who by the way was formerly his oracle) to accept and appreciate many things which I supposed would find no favor in New York. Hiram Sheldon was really in many things a wiser man than I have given him credit for. He foretold to Cook that God would set a leader over Perfectionists. To almost everything I said Cook would respond, "That is just like Hiram Sheldon!" He seemed to have found in me his old champion, as I found in him my old friend Dutton.

One evening Charles Jones of Deruyter called. Our words with him were few and cool. He said that Alexander Wilder was staying at his house. I asked if Wilder preached. Jones said, "No, he does not presume to;" and added, "To tell the truth, I do not think he is qualified." This is one of Wilder's best friends. Jones attempted no discussion with me, but told Cook in the street that he himself and I and all would have

## Divulging the Secret

to "come down." He cautioned Cook against embarking in any organization "auxiliary to Putney."

We attended Miner's prayer meeting one evening, but heard only a discussion of church business. We also attended a theater one evening, much to the amusement of Brother Burnham, who had never seen anything of the kind before.

During the week Cook had sent notice of our visit to brethren in Baldwinsville and other places in the vicinity. We were expecting Hatch and Foot daily, but they did not make their appearance and we had nearly given up the idea of seeing a gathering of believers. But on Sunday morning Brother Robinson and others called, and we found ourselves surrounded by quite an assembly. I preached familiarly on love and discrimination, and gave an account of the state of things at Putney. In the afternoon Cook was pressed in spirit to speak in a manner unexpected by himself. He said that in years past he had thought me ambitious of leadership, and had resented my censure of Boyle and others; but within a year he had begun to see that my course was right, and at last he had sent for me. He expressed entire confidence in me, and gave his vote for my appointment to the post of generalissimo of Perfectionists. This gave me occasion to open my whole heart on the subject of leadership. I explained the law of spiritual gravitation, by which every man in a true medium finds his just level, and showed that by that law I could not help being a leader. In conclusion I said: "I care nothing about titles; but I shall serve the church of God with all my might, and if this makes me generalissimo, so be it. I cannot help it, you cannot help it, and we ought not to wish to if we could."

Brother Burnham spoke next. He poured out his heart on the necessity of Perfectionists having a center of unity, a post in the middle, which could be relied upon. His words came with power.

## The Putney Community

After this Brother Robinson and several others expressed themselves freely. There was but one mind. All followed the lead of Brother Cook, confessing their former doubts, their present confidence, their hearty assent to all that I had said, and their rejoicing at my coming among them. The meeting was sober and quiet, and in that respect, as Brother Cook said, unlike the usual meetings in that region; but it was sublime like some of our meetings at Putney. Truth and peace presided.

After all had spoken their minds I gave my views of God's general plan and the position occupied by the church at Putney. I said that God's first object was to provide depots and officers for his army; that in the present state of things, destitute as we were of these necessities, the more raw recruits we obtained the worse we were off; that the object of our undertaking at Putney was to establish a military school, a West Point for the training of engineers and officers. I assured them that I wished not to force my views upon any one, but said that I was convinced myself that this was God's scheme, and that all who saw it to be so would in due time labor and sacrifice heartily to sustain our enterprise at Putney.

All present thanked God that they had seen me and heard my voice, and we parted with many good words and hopes.

NOYES TO WILLIAM C. GOULD OF ONEIDA, NEW YORK

Putney, February 12, 1847.

*Brother Gould:*

I am glad to hear from you again after so long silence, though your letter places me in the attitude of a culprit and calls me to plead at a bar where I have thus far found but little favor. I am not fond of the defensive position; yet I will frankly present to you, and through you to those unnamed leaders who have taken offense at my proceedings, my apology



## Disbuling the Secret

for that unceremonious advent and departure of which you complain.

In the first place I have a "thorn in the flesh," which has precluded me from public speaking and from much conversation for four years past. . . . I have not been abroad at all during that time till this winter and, though my throat is much stronger than it was a year or two ago, I am by no means in fit condition now to attend conventions or involve myself in such a hubbub of disputation as your plans would have brought upon me. In fact I went to Syracuse at some apparent risk to my life, but I went for an object which was worth the risk, and by the good providence of God I was shielded from what I feared, a flood of gossiping and preaching, and accomplished my mission not indeed without suffering but I hope without serious injury.

In the next place neither my care for my lungs nor any fear of opposition nor feeling of disfellowship prevented me from giving what I deemed sufficient notice of my visit to Syracuse. . . . My brother informed W. S. Hatch of it two weeks beforehand, and requested him to circulate the information; and my mother sent Hatch ten dollars by my advice to make it more convenient for him to meet me at Syracuse. I waited a week in daily expectation of a visit from him and those in communication with him, and really thought that instead of being a culprit I had reason for surprise if not complaint at their keeping away. . . .

If I am asked why I pitched upon Syracuse for my visit in preference to other places in New York, my answer is that I received from Cook a more cordial and urgent invitation than from any other person. He asked me to visit him not for the purpose of settling difficulties or helping him in a scheme for organization, but that I might look into Syracuse as a field of spiritual and business operations, and that we might become



## The Putney Community

acquainted and form a cordial union. The frankness with which he confessed that his prejudices against me had been removed, the ungrudging freedom with which he acknowledged the wisdom of my past course and the value of my labors, his unembarrassed position in relation to your organization, with which I have no connection, drew me toward him, and I am satisfied that I have hit the mark in devoting what time and strength I had to opening full communication with him.

As to settling the difficulties between me and Perfectionists in the State of New York, I have had much precious evidence (among the rest the testimony of your own letter) that God has been settling them, and I have been willing to leave the work in his hands without anxiety. I think the honest and true are already reconciled to me, or are in the way to be without difficulty, and those who are liable to flame up into enemies because I go and come when and where I please have no hearts to know me, no love for the truth which God has sent them by me, and will not be saved from hostility by my courting them personally. . . .

I have no definitive judgment about your organization, because I know but little about it. The unfavorable impressions which I have received have arisen from the following circumstances: John B. Foot invited me to attend a convention and take part in forming an organization. I replied that I thought a local convention of a few days' continuance was not likely to concentrate the hearts and views of the whole body of Perfectionists and settle rightly the fundamental principles of organization. I therefore proposed that the movement be commenced by a free discussion in the paper, and I offered our columns for that purpose. To this suggestion I received no answer. The next I heard was that Foot, Hatch and others had formed an organization and appointed bishops; and since

## Disbuling the Secret

then I have been invited directly or indirectly to coöperate and even to take the post of "generalissimo." Waiving all difficulty about Foot's lack of courtesy in taking no notice of my suggestions I must say that I cannot have confidence in an organization formed under such circumstances unless it simply proposes to be local and temporary. Whether this is the intent of the movers, or whether they suppose that they are laying permanent and catholic foundations I know not, but I think it safe for me to stand aloof from them. At the same time I have none but friendly feelings toward some of those who are prominent among them.

One other circumstance has made an unfavorable impression. I perceive that Alexander Wilder has prominent agency in your proceedings. I have no confidence in him, and I do not believe that he has the confidence of any considerable number of believers in New York or elsewhere. I might say the same of several others who are reported to be among your pillars. Now I am sure that confidence in one another is essential to your agreement and success, and I shall not expect much good from an organization which does not commence with this element.

Your intimation that another paper will be started does not disturb me. If God allows it, it will be for some good purpose. If a new paper should serve the truth, I would rejoice in its success. If it should fight against the truth, I would expect to be enabled to destroy it. I have long expected a move of this kind. Perhaps no prudence on your part or mine can prevent it. . . .

Now, Brother, I think you can see that my visit to Syracuse was neither unmeaning nor hostile to New York Perfectionists. Your plans for me have been frustrated, but I think God's plans have succeeded and will succeed. If I accomplish what I intend, I shall put things in train for consummating the union

## The Putney Community

between New York and New England far more effectually than could be done by conventions or my personal labors. I frankly acknowledge my hope of help from you, and solicit your coöperation. Will you not take hold of this business with Cook? If your heart is for it, write to him, or better still go and see him, and he will open to you his whole heart and mine. . . .

In love to you and your wife,

JOHN H. NOYES.

NOYES TO WM. H. COOK

Putney, February 12, 1847.

*Dear Brother:*

I think of my visit at your house with great satisfaction. It was attended with too little noise and smoke to suit the taste of some, but I prefer the sharp crack of the rifle when it carries the bullet of execution to the bluster of the musket loaded with never so big a blank cartridge. I think I have hit the nail in the center of New York, and I shall be very sure of it if the scheme I have laid before you comes to a prosperous birth.

My heart is all sunshine toward you, and your wife, and Mary, and many others that I communed with at Syracuse. I shall receive a letter from your wife as a great favor. Will not Mary also correspond with me?

On my way home I stopped two days at Belchertown, and had much profitable interchange with believers there. . . . On the very day of my arrival home Brothers Kinsley and Dunn with their wives came to visit us and stayed a week. My discourse with them and at Belchertown turned on the same topics that we handled at Syracuse, and the electricity of heaven was equally active. So you see God is making a simultaneous movement in many quarters.

Yours truly,

JOHN H. NOYES.

## Divulging the Secret

The Kinsleys and Dunns drove all the way from their Northern Vermont home to Putney, one hundred and twenty-five miles, with their own teams and sleighs. The morning they started for home, commented Miller, they "felt quite sober, but well satisfied with their visit."

Suspensions as to Complex Marriage in the group immediately around Noyes now began to be felt by Perfectionists at Putney who had not yet been admitted to the secret. In the spring of 1847 Lydia, wife of Dr. John Campbell, obtained a knowledge of the facts by cross-questioning Harriet Skinner. In the tempest that followed the disclosure Mrs. Achsah Campbell entreated Lydia to request an explanation in person from Noyes, saying, "I do not believe that men or even devils can deceive you." Lydia accompanied by Mrs. Achsah Campbell's daughter Helen called on Noyes, and he gave them the explanation they asked. After conversing with several others of Noyes's household Lydia became convinced that Noyes was right, and she convinced Mrs. Achsah Campbell without pressure from Noyes. Mrs. Achsah Campbell then tried to persuade Dr. Campbell, her step-son, to talk with Noyes, but he refused.

## Chapter 23

### CONVERSION OF HELEN, EMMA AND LUCINDA

**A**MONG the earliest converts to Perfectionism at Putney were Dr. Alexander Campbell and his wife Achsah (Richardson) Campbell. They had embraced the doctrine during Noyes's first preaching campaign at Putney in the spring of 1835, and had opened their home for his public meetings. Dr. Campbell had died a Perfectionist in 1839, and Mrs. Campbell had remained one of Noyes's staunchest friends. Their daughters, Emma and Helen, in the spring of 1847 had reached the age of twenty-four and twenty-one years. John, a son of Dr. Campbell by a former marriage, had taken his father's place as one of the Putney physicians. Though not a professed Perfectionist he was intellectually convinced, and until alienated by later events was counted upon to become a member. His wife Lydia was an ardent Perfectionist, her conversion also dating back to 1835.

Helen spent the winter of 1846-7 at a ladies' seminary in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Another Putney girl, Lucinda Lamb, fifteen years of age, was there. The seminary was in the midst of a religious revival. John R. Miller, who made a business trip to Boston in January, accompanied Helen to her school. After his return to Putney there was a stately minuet of correspondence between them on religion.

JOHN R. MILLER TO HELEN CAMPBELL

Putney, January 20, 1847.

*Miss Helen:*

I have promised your family to send you a letter by my truckman, and I know of no way that I can get my pay except by claiming the privilege of putting in one myself. I told



## Conversion of Helen, Emma and Lucinda

Charlotte you wanted her to write to you, but she said I must. So you see I have plenty of reasons for writing.

I arrived safe in Putney the next day after I left Boston. Found the folks all well. I was quite pleased to find Emma at our house. The only thing that displeases me is that she is too much afraid to stay and will not make herself at home.

The account you gave me of your bold and decided testimony in favor of the truth was most interesting. Nothing you could say would give me so much pleasure except to hear from your own lips that you had given up all for Christ, that you had found that "pearl of great price." I believe your testimony will be the means of great good. God will honor those who honor him. I do not wonder that you are disgusted with the religious exercises you are obliged to submit to, but they will show you the difference between the false religion of the day and the truth.

Since my return from Boston my heart's desire and prayer to God has been that you might "present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, and all things else shall be added." I will not set before you death and future misery as an inducement, but life, everlasting life in the sunshine of God's love. What are the offers of the world? A few years' pleasure at most, and of these we are not sure. Christ offers to make you joint heir with himself to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. He offers you an hundred fold for all you forsake in this life. These promises are for you, yes you, Helen, and they are sure, they are real, something that you can receive and enjoy now. The first thought will probably be that you will have to forsake the pleasures of the world. This was the case with me. But I found, and I know you will find, that you have just begun to enjoy real pleasure, which

## The Putney Community

the world can neither give nor take away, and which will last forever. Your path will shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

If we are the children of God, we can say with perfect safety that we know we shall never want, for our father owns all things, and we have the promise that all things shall work together for good to those who love God.

I was astonished to find you so well acquainted with the Bible and especially the subject of salvation from sin. I hope you will never give up your testimony for the truth, and I do not believe you will. I believe you will yet be a bright ornament in the church of Christ. . . .

If you have anything to write, we should all be glad to hear from you.

Very respectfully your friend,

J. R. MILLER.

HELEN CAMPBELL TO JOHN R. MILLER

Charlestown, Massachusetts, February 2, 1847.

*Mr. Miller:*

Your brotherly letter was gladly and, as you said, kindly received. I did not think when I broke open the wrapper to find one from you, which was all the pleasanter because unexpected.

When you left me that night at the door, I returned to my room feeling very sad. Your pleasant picture of home and Mother's nice chamber in contrast with this place made me wish myself there also. I enjoyed the liberty of speech so much that afternoon, that I found the restrictions here more tiresome than ever.

And now let me thank you for the interest manifested in your letter for my spiritual welfare. But I fear you think I have more knowledge of the Bible than I have. I only said

## Conversion of Helen, Emma and Lucinda

what I knew to be the truth, and what I should think any one would see who reads the Bible at all. I felt more than ever my ignorance, for I did not dare to advance an idea in opposition to theirs for fear that I could not defend it as it deserved.

You say, perhaps the religious exercises will be for my good. That is one consolation certainly, and I think so myself, for whether I would or not I am obliged to read and even make the Bible in part a study, which has anything but the desired effect, for it only makes me see the plainer their inconsistency. . . . I know I shall have your sympathy, for I am a perfect martyr. They seem determined that I shall attend prayer meeting every evening, and listen to prayers I have no faith in. I dread to leave my room, for I am sure to meet some one with a book or tract setting forth in glowing colors the future misery of the impenitent, with nothing but the dark side, certainly more as a threat than an argument. Another will put a very urgent note into your hand requesting an answer. I have just answered one of that description. But thanks to my large organ of firmness, I have been able as yet to maintain my own opinion upon the subject. I say to them: "It will do no good for you to talk to me, for you cannot make me think as you do."

Last week I had a conversation with one of the teachers. She said she would like to know my views as to the doctrines taught in the Bible. I told her that I believed in the doctrine of perfect holiness, and that without it "no man shall see the Lord." "Oh," said she, "you are taking a standard you can never reach." "Well," said I, "I had rather take a high one believing it can be reached, than a low one and every day have to confess that I had come far short of that." "Then," said she, "I presume you do not like our confessions of sin in our daily devotions." I told her I thought, after confessing sins they should be forsaken; but as long as they thought

## The Putney Community

themselves "utterly unworthy of even the crumbs that fall from the table" because of their sinfulness, I could not think their prayers would do me any good. "But," said she, "if you were to die tonight, don't you think you would be much worse off than they?" I told her that I could not see why I should be, because they confess themselves sinners, and I confess myself a sinner; there we were even. But I had taken no vows upon me to live. "soberly and righteously and godly" in the present life, therefore I had broken none. If there was a difference, I should be glad to have her explain it to me. She said the difference was, one was an unconverted sinner, and the other was a converted sinner. She said perhaps there was such a thing as living without sin, but under the circumstances she did not see how we could, and did not think it would be expected. . . . I must confess I trembled when she began to talk to me, for she was so much older and wiser. I hesitated whether I should tell her plainly what I thought, but finally concluded, if she asked me, I should tell her. . . .

I could write much more, but will not for fear of wearying you. My room is full of girls all talking, so that I hardly know what I have been writing.

Give much love to Mrs. Miller. I am glad, if she could not write, that she let you.

You said in your letter that you would drop the subject for the present. Whenever you see fit to resume it, it will be gladly received by

Your friend, HELEN.

JOHN R. MILLER TO MRS. POLLY NOYES

Putney, May 5, 1847.

*Dear Mother:* . . .

John had a plain talk with Mrs. Campbell about the management of her daughters. I have had a good deal of talk with



## Conversion of Helen, Emma and Lucinda

Helen since her return from Charlestown. She professes to be seeking for the truth, but is not ready to confess Christ before the world. She knows however that she will sometime. I told her last Sunday that she must talk with John, that he was better qualified than I to give her instruction. She said she could not do that. I replied that she should either come into our meeting and confess Christ or talk with John to prove to me that she was honest and sincere, and that if she would not, I should have no more to say to her. I do not know what she will do. She is in great distress of mind, and will, I think, turn the right way. If she should, it would have a great influence on the young people in this town, and she would be a valuable member of our society.

Yours affectionately,

J. R. M.

JOHN R. MILLER TO MRS. ACHSAH R. CAMPBELL

Putney, May 11, 1847.

*Dear Mrs. Campbell:*

My intimacy with and attachment to you and your family for a few months past have placed me in a position where I feel that I cannot be true to God without stating to you plainly the view I take of your present attitude, however painful it may be.

In all my association with Emma and Helen my only motive has been to bring them to the knowledge and confession of the truth. If you or they supposed that I had any other motive, you have altogether undervalued my friendship. . . .

When Helen was at Charlestown last winter, I rejoiced in the trials she had to pass through because I saw the hand of God in them. But I must say that I think you manifested more anxiety about her education, and a fear that she would spend her money for nothing; more interest in her having a piano and



## The Putney Community

learning to play well than in having a pure heart and learning the great truths of the gospel. You have been quite as anxious that she should appear lovely and respectable to the world as that she should make herself lovely in the sight of God.

I am convinced that you do not know your own heart. If you sought their greatest good, you would look beyond their present sufferings in separating from the world to the glory that will follow. I think you will sometime acknowledge that this is true.

I believe Helen knows what I have written to be the truth, and I call upon her to bear testimony to it, and do her duty in the fear of God.

I hope most sincerely that this will be received, as it is written, in a spirit of love.

Yours affectionately,

J. R. M.

JOHN R. MILLER TO HELEN CAMPBELL

Putney, May 21, 1847.

*Dear friend Helen:*

The work of God is going on gloriously here. All the opposition of the world and the Devil cannot stop it. Last evening Emma came and talked with Mr. Noyes till ten o'clock. He was very well satisfied with her state. At the same time we had an interesting meeting in the parlor.

About eight o'clock last evening I called on Lucinda a moment. I told her that I had been wanting to have a talk with her for a long time, but that I had concluded to get her father's consent first, if I could, so that he would have no occasion of offense. She said that she thought he would oppose. This morning I sent for him to come to the store. He went upstairs with George Noyes and myself. I told him that I felt an interest in Lucinda, and would be glad to invite her to our meetings. He

## Conversion of Helen, Emma and Lucinda

said he was willing that I should do so and that she should be a Perfectionist; he was glad she was interested in the subject, and would do nothing to prevent her. After explaining to him our principles for about two hours, I went up to see Lucinda. She was delighted to find that her father would not oppose her, and said she would come this evening with Emma and talk with Mr. Noyes. Is not this first-rate?

I feel as though I was in a powerful revival, and that it will not stop here. Mr. Noyes says that Emma's case is different from yours, that the difficulties that were overcome in you were for both of you. I think Emma manifests a lovely spirit.

Yours truly,  
J. R. MILLER.

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO GEORGE CRAGIN

Putney, May 26, 1847.

*Dear Brother:* . . .

Nature has attired herself in a beautiful new dress since you were here, and the old Chateau is a bower of foliage and blossoms. But our spiritual bloom is more remarkable. Emma, Helen and Lucinda, the flowers of the village, were all at our meeting last evening, regular participants at our Lord's supper. John proposed that we should all express our heart's desire. It was delightful to hear them say how much they desired to know the will of God and do it. What new-born feelings! Afterwards we had a game of Bible cards, as John called it, every one opening the Bible, as we have done sometimes you know. The whole selection was grand, but I will give you the verses of the three novitiates: Helen's, Gal. 6:4, "But let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Emma's, Mark 5:36, "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken,

## The Putney Community

He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe." Lucinda's, John 18:7, "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth." John was much delighted. To finish we danced, and George and Mr. Woolworth saw the damsels home. . . .

As a point of delicacy and fairness it was thought best to consult with Mr. Lamb before the overtures of Lucinda were received. How to succeed in obtaining his consent was the question. He was known to be opposed. The thought struck John that George would make a good mediator, so George went with Mr. Miller to talk with Mr. Lamb, and between them both they obtained his consent that she should put herself under John's instructions. The same evening she came over, and was "taken into the church," as John expressed it in relating in the parlor his interview. But the next day her father changed his mind and, without knowing that the covenant had been made, desired Lucinda not to join any church but to have a conversation with the Rev. Mr. Foster! This they call "taking back a move," but the beauty of it is that his first move lost him the game. Something is going every day. You must not expect this prize is carried off and nothing said. The church and the village are astir, people are taking sides, gossips are lively, men collect in the corners of the streets, suspicious conjunctions are observed. . . .

John says this is the breaking out of the last great cholera of the judgment, and he expects to see it run through all the land. The evidences of its infection and spreading in this town are revealed every day. You will come into new scenes when you return. John exhorts George to invest himself with the whole armor of truth, for he expects a great deal of discussion public and private will have to be done. . . .

Here I broke off to go down into the parlor at the usual hour for gathering, and now at two o'clock A. M., being wide

## Conversion of Helen, Emma and Lucinda

awake and likely to be so, I have jumped up to put in a curious episode. The subject of conversation in the parlor was Lucinda's case. Her father has broken bounds today, and things look threatening. Tomorrow he is going to take her up to Mr. Foster. We all concluded that there was nothing to fear from that. Lucinda's firmness and our prayers were to be relied upon. But if he should compel her to remove her boarding-place and forsake our society, what then? John has just been up here with a fancy. What if George should go tomorrow morning and ask Lucinda if she will marry him, and then ask Mr. Lamb's consent? (One of Mr. Lamb's great troubles is that John dictates our marriages, but he has signified his acceptance of George for his daughter.) This would be a perfect countercheck to the plans of the enemy, and place Lucinda independent of her parents under John's instruction. George makes no reply, but the morning will decide. So good night. . . .

Thursday morning, bright and beautiful. Mr. Lamb has just gone by with a horse and wagon. George has seen Lucinda and invited her to ride this afternoon; is considering John's fancy with favor. Perhaps I shall be able to tell more before the mail goes out. The paper probably will not make much progress today. George finds it quite a responsibility, but he is courageous and never duns for articles, which makes me want to help him. Do write!

Yours,

H. H. S.

NOYES TO MR. LAMB

Putney, June 4, 1847.

Mr. Lamb.

*Sir:*

The relation which exists between me and your daughter is one which I did not seek. It was thrown upon me by the provi-



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dence of God with her free choice and your own consent. That relation involves me in responsibilities which I must discharge to the best of my ability as a servant of God. I find it to be my duty at the present juncture to apprise you distinctly of the position which I hold and of the course I shall take in relation to Lucinda.

You are the father of her body. God is the father of her spirit. You have the legal right and the physical power to dispose of her body, to send her where you will. God has the absolute right and the irresistible power to direct the movements of her spirit and fix her heart on the Kingdom and followers of his Son. Christ himself has distinctly forewarned us that collisions between his claims and the claims of earthly relatives will occur in the going forth of his Kingdom. "Think not," he says, "that I am come to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be those of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." It is at least supposable that these words are being fulfilled in your family, that your daughter has accepted the call of Christ and you have rejected it, and that a collision between your claims and Christ's is approaching. You will naturally reject such a supposition; yet it may be true.

I believe that it is true, and believing thus I am bound in the first place to do my best to make you aware of what you are doing. I count it an act not of enmity but of love to say to you, Beware of the attempt to take your daughter out of God's hands. "Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the



## Conversion of Helen, Emma and Lucinda

potsherds of the earth, but woe to him who striveth with his Maker."

In the second place, believing as I do, I am bound to stand on God's side in the collision, if it must come, and the love of Christ will constrain me to do all I can lawfully to maintain his claim against yours. If I am true to him, I must say to Lucinda as I have opportunity, "Stand fast in the faith and fellowship of the gospel of salvation from sin. Call no man father on earth, for your father is in heaven. Fear not them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." It would be disagreeable to me as well as to her to be put to the necessity of taking a stand against you, but it would be still more disagreeable to fail in my duty to Christ and to her soul.

I think your present project of sending Lucinda away from her religious friends is as unnatural and as cruel to her soul as it would be to take a new-born infant away from its mother.

I do not believe that you will succeed in alienating her from her present faith nor from us. Nor do I believe that she will make the improvement in worldly studies which you have in view. The effect of your efforts to separate her from us will be to alienate her wholly from yourself. There is good reason to believe that she has enough of her parents' firmness (to say nothing of the grace of God) to enable her to hold out against any forcing process that you can bring to bear upon her. As a friend therefore to her and to you and to the ties between her and you, I advise you to let her remain where she is.

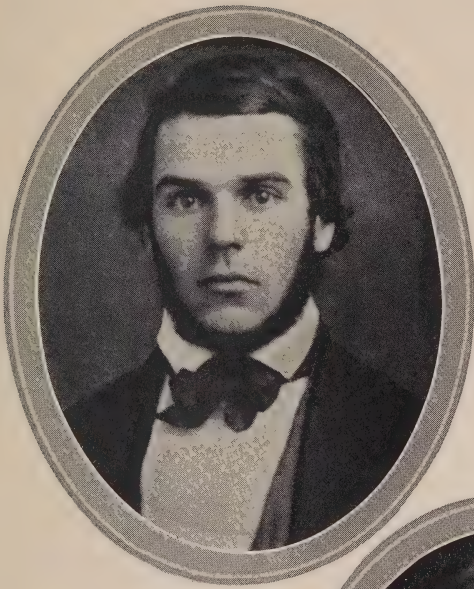
I do not believe that your relation with her will ever again be such as you wish till you follow her into the confession of Christ a savior from sin. If you and your wife instead of attempting to resist and harass Lucinda would follow her, I am persuaded not only that she would be a lovely and loving

## The Putney Community

daughter to you, but that the great first breach between you and your wife would be healed, and in the bosom of a happy family you would bless the day when she embraced a religion that has power to heal divisions and bind hearts together for eternity.

Your friend,

JOHN H. NOYES.



WILLIAM H.  
WOOLWORTH



EMMA A. (CAMPBELL) WOOLWORTH



## Chapter 24

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME

OUTLINE OF REMARKS BY J. H. NOYES AT A MEETING OF BELIEVERS AT PUTNEY ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 1, 1847

*The Spiritual Magazine* 11: 65

THE testimony of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and of the apostles down to the second coming of Christ in 70 A. D. was "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This has been our testimony since the re-appearance in our day of the primitive gospel, salvation from sin. We believe that the kingdom now coming is the same that was established in heaven at the second coming of Christ. God then commenced a kingdom in human nature independent of the laws of this world. That kingdom, withdrawn to heaven, has been strengthening and enlarging itself ever since. We look for its re-establishment here, and this extension of an existing government into this world is what we mean by the coming of the Kingdom of God.

But we have expected that the manifestation of this kingdom after a successful career of eighteen hundred years in the invisible world will be by a process different from the original one.

The difference may be illustrated thus: If it is understood that on the 21st day of March at noon spring begins, the



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natural declaration before that time is "Spring is at hand," and immediately afterward, "Spring is come." This was the situation of the Primitive Church. The second coming of the Lord Jesus was to mark the exact time of their translation to the invisible kingdom. "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ" was the new testimony that was raised in heaven at that time.<sup>1</sup> But if it is understood that spring coincides not with a fixed astronomical period but with a particular stage of the sun's power over the earth, it is impossible to refer the advent of spring to any precise point of time. To determine the presence of spring in this case is more difficult than in the other, but within a moderate latitude of time and with a certain accumulation of data it is easily done. Through the month of March the progress of the sun up the heavens is distinctly visible, though there is yet a prevalence of wintry weather. Later when we begin to have mild, spring-like days there are also occasional ones in which the ground is covered with snow. Yet we are certain that sometime within the limits of April spring will have come. Such is our problem with reference to the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. The evidence goes to show that the Kingdom of God will be established here not in a formal, dramatic way, but by a process like that which brings the seasonal spring. The Primitive Church like the sun will come near to us, and the judgment and resurrection will be effected by an infusion of the light and energy of God.

I will put the question, Is not now the time for us to commence the testimony that the Kingdom of God has come? We must not do this on insufficient grounds; nor should we be withheld from it by merely apparent difficulties.

I think there is abundant evidence, especially in the last year, that the judgment has begun. He that searcheth the hearts

<sup>1</sup> Rev. 12: 10.

## The Kingdom of God Has Come

and trieth the reins has been among us cutting between the righteous and the wicked and between good and evil in our own characters. So of the resurrection. We have seen that there is a power among us that can conquer death. Some of us have lived for a long time in the jaws of death, and also in the jaws of the resurrection; dying daily and rising daily.

With a mighty hand and marvelous wisdom God has gathered us together here. We have been able to cut our way through the isolation and selfishness in which the mass of men exist, and have attained a position in which before heaven and earth we trample under foot the domestic and pecuniary fashions of the world. Separate households, property exclusiveness have come to an end with us. Our Association is established on principles opposed at every point to the institutions of the world.

If our spiritual attainments are inferior to those of the Primitive Church before 70 A. D., on the other hand our political and corporate position is in advance of theirs. The fact that communism is developed with us at an earlier period of experience than with them corresponds with the advancing purpose of God. They were not destined to remain an organized body in the world. A future branch of the church was to be the medium of establishing on earth the institutions of heaven, and of extending God's everlasting dominion over men.

### STATEMENT BY THE EDITOR OF *The Spiritual Magazine*

A discussion followed in which the nature and effect of the proposed act were fully examined. The new relation which such a declaration would bring us into with the Primitive Church was shown by the following illustration: Suppose it a fact that the government of the United States is destined to prevail over the American continent. The inhabitants of cer-

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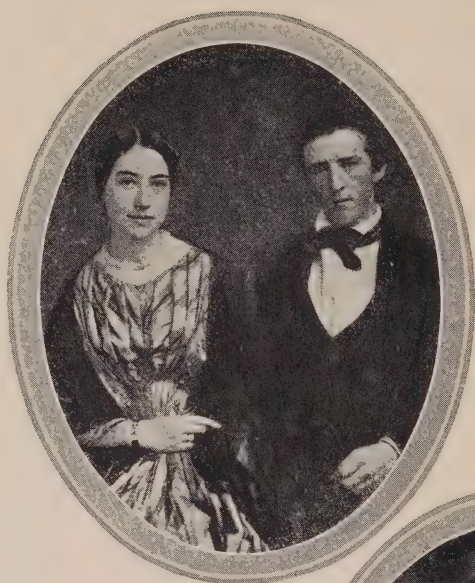
tain provinces in Mexico get this persuasion. They study the principles and laws of our government, they correspond with our citizens and obtain correct ideas of our designs. After a proper time they declare their annexation and put themselves under our protection. These provinces might not be as civilized in every respect as our States were when they obtained their independence, yet all their political relations would be vastly superior; they would come in on a constitutional level with the States as they exist now, and would have for all purposes of defense and public necessity the strength, experience and revenue which this nation has accumulated during sixty years. So, although we are not equal to the Primitive Church as they were in 70 A. D., yet by the act of annexation we shall be admitted to a full partnership with them as they exist now.

All expressed themselves deliberately and freely. The indivisible unity and unfeigned brotherly love, the growing momentum of improvement, the increasing intimacy of communication with God's invisible kingdom, which have been conferred upon this body, were mentioned among the proofs of God's purpose concerning us. Respecting the fire of judgment and the power of the resurrection among us there was but one belief and one voice. It was seen that a new and further confession of truth was necessary. Therefore it was unanimously adopted as the declaration of the believers assembled, that *The Kingdom of God Has Come*.

PAPER BY NOYES AUGUST 28, 1872

The declaration [that has been reported above] was made at an important crisis. It bore the same relation to the Oneida Community as the Declaration of Independence did to the United States. We had commenced the practice of our present institutions a year before, but the movement had been somewhat private. Now we were approaching public cognizance





GEORGE W. NOYES  
HELEN (CAMPBELL)  
NOYES



LUCINDA LAMB



## The Kingdom of God Has Come

in various ways. At this point we held that solemn meeting, and made the declaration that the Kingdom of God had come. This declaration was proclaimed soon afterward in our paper.

A singular incident occurred at the close of the meeting. At the exact moment when the vote was taken a sublime clap of thunder like a cannon salvo startled us. It was the only clap that evening, and was so entirely unexpected that it seemed like Heaven's response to our act.

In a double wedding July 12, 1847, George W. Noyes was married to Helen Campbell, and William H. Woolworth to Emma Campbell. The ceremony was performed by Hon. Larkin G. Mead.

## Chapter 25

### CURE OF HARRIET HALL

TESTIMONY OF HARRIET HALL JULY 3, 1847

**E**IGHT years ago I was taken sick. . . . All exercise was attended with much pain, so that I was at last forbidden by the physician even to walk or stand on my feet. Three years from the commencement of my sickness I was suddenly reduced to entire blindness. This continued six months. In the seventh month I began to see a little.

About this time my mind became interested in the subject of animal magnetism, and hearing that Mr. J. H. Noyes had made some successful experiments in that science I sent for him. His operations had some good effect on my eyes. I soon began to perceive that he was a Christian, and requested him to inform me about his faith. He sent me books and papers, and conversed with me; and I saw the truth of his testimony and confessed myself a believer in perfect holiness. . . . Soon after this (October 27, 1843) I was conveyed to Mr. Noyes's house. To the astonishment of my friends the ride did not pain or tire me, and I steadily grew better under Mr. Noyes's care till I was able to walk about the house quite comfortably. My head and eyes improved so that I could write again.

After several weeks Alexander Wilder, who was then in Mr. Noyes's family, began to magnetize me, and assumed the charge of my case. From this time I began to be worse. I returned home, and to my old state of prostration and darkness.

## Cure of Harriet Hall

About this time the separation between Mr. Noyes and Mr. Wilder took place, and I was deceived by Mr. Wilder so far that I lost much of my first confidence in Mr. Noyes. My health continued to grow worse for the ensuing three years and a half.

On the 2nd of November, 1845, I was married to Mr. Hall, a man who, though somewhat friendly to Mr. Noyes's writings, was on the whole an infidel. I was barely able to sit up long enough to go through the marriage ceremony. After this I was separated still farther from Mr. Noyes and at last became nearly as much a skeptic as my husband.

But in the meantime my brother and two sisters had returned fully to fellowship with Mr. Noyes, and so communication was kept open between him and our family. By this means my heart was finally turned back to my first love and confidence. . . .

I had felt all through my sickness a dim instinctive assurance that I should yet recover, and from the time of my first acquaintance with Mr. Noyes I had more or less expectation that I should be healed by faith. This expectation revived with much strength at the time of my return to his fellowship. . . .

It may be mentioned here that in the whole course of my sickness medicine of every kind proved ineffectual and injurious. I consulted at different times not less than ten physicians. At length I lost all confidence in medicines, and about the time of my renewal of acquaintance with Mr. Noyes entirely abandoned the use of them, committing my case to the care of God.

On the 22nd of June Mr. Noyes in company with Mrs. Cragin visited me. I was at that time in a very low condition, lower than ever before. I was unable to move or be moved without excruciating pain. A mere crack of the window below the curtain was all that I could endure. Yet I expected to be

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healed, and even to go home with Mr. Noyes at his first visit, and had told my husband so on that very morning.

I will not attempt a particular account of the things that were said and done by Mr. Noyes and Mrs. Cragin during the three hours of their visit to my dark room. They will speak of these things for themselves. I will only say that I was calm and happy through scenes which would once have been agitating and even frightful to me.

Mr. Noyes at one time spoke of going home, but I could not believe that he would go till I could go with him. At length I told him that I would do anything that he would bid me. He told me to sit up in the bed. I did so with ease. He then commanded me with great energy to "get up," and taking me by the hand led me to a chair. Without pain and with great delight I sat before the window. Mrs. Cragin raised the curtain and let in the blaze of day. My eyes were perfectly well, and drank in the beauty of a world all new to me with wonderful pleasure. I was constrained to declare again and again that I was perfectly well. I called for work, and found myself able to knit with facility. It was soon determined that I should go home with Mr. Noyes and Mrs. Cragin. I was immediately stripped by my sisters and Mrs. Cragin of my extra flannels and caps and my grave clothes in general, and in an ordinary dress without spectacles or veil I took my seat in the carriage and rode two miles in the light of a midday summer's sun without the least fatigue. That was indeed a joyful ride. I was conscious of perfect health. All pain had vanished.

This event took place about two weeks ago. I have never doubted since that I was healed instantaneously by the power of God. I have been able to ride long distances, to attend meetings in the evening at home and on Sunday at the Chapel, and to take my meals with the family. My appetite is very good. My eyes are strong. I am fast overcoming the effects of the

## Cure of Harriet Hall

long disuse of my limbs, and am learning to walk as fast as can be expected of a child. On the whole I can honestly say that, whereas for eight years I have been a miserable, bed-ridden, half-dead victim of disease, I am now well.

TESTIMONY OF MRS. MARY E. CRAGIN JULY 3, 1847

During the past three months I have been myself afflicted with a painful disease, which I ascribed to various secondary causes. Despairing of help from human aid I committed myself fully to Jesus Christ as physician for the body as well as the soul. After making this surrender the scales fell from my eyes, and I recognized unbelief as the first cause of disease and death. I saw that I must have a healthy spirit in order to have a healthy body. After much bodily suffering and mental conflict with the powers of darkness I was enabled to confess Christ within me as savior from the power of unbelief. The result was an almost immediate restoration to health. Sickness left me as suddenly as it had seized me, and I found myself able to prove by word and deed that the power of Christ's resurrection had taken effect in every part of my nature.

Before I received final deliverance I thought much of the case of Mrs. Hall. From what I heard I was sensible that she was fast approaching the same point with myself, a thorough conviction that faith alone could save her from death. I fully believed that the work begun in her in 1843 would be completed, but was conscious that any testimony from me respecting the power of faith would be ineffectual so long as I was in bondage myself. On the morning after my confession of Christ I felt as though I was ready to testify. . . . When I entered her darkened room and saw her helpless condition, I was struck with horror at the mighty power of unbelief, and the thought arose in my mind that she was in the same grave



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from which I had been raised. At the same time I felt a perfect willingness to go down into the grave again, if by so doing I could help her out. As these thoughts and desires occupied my heart I was conscious of general sickness unlike anything I had ever felt before. But as my mind was filled with what I was anxious to say to her I gave no attention to my bodily feelings.

When Mr. Noyes said to me that I might speak, I immediately began to tell her what God had done for me in saving me from unbelief. I had not talked more than a minute before a "horror of great darkness" seized me. My eyes grew dim, my hearing left me; still I resisted until my tongue was palsied and I did not know what I was saying. I had sufficient consciousness left to attempt to go to the door, but I felt Mr. Noyes was not willing. I was sinking lower and lower into a dreadful, dark abyss. When I began to recover I found myself sitting in a chair, and heard Mr. Noyes commanding me in a loud voice to look at him. His tones thrilled me like a shock of electricity, and as soon as I looked at him life triumphed over death. I rose and walked the room astonished and delighted at the power which I felt diffusing itself through my veins, recalling me to newness of life. I said to Mrs. Hall, "This is the most effectual preaching you can have; I have tasted of death, and behold the power of the resurrection."

After conversing with her some time this same horror of unbelief began to paralyze me again. I rose and attempted to throw it off, but could not. I called to Mr. Noyes, and had sufficient presence of mind to look steadily at him until I partook of his strength and it passed away. The remainder of the day I was stupid and sleepy, and felt as I imagine persons do who have been recovered from drowning; but since that time I have been perfectly sound in health.

## Cure of Harriet Hall

TESTIMONY OF NOYES JULY 3, 1847

Many circumstances have conspired to draw the attention of believers in this place within a few months toward the healing power of Christ, and to raise a belief in their minds that great manifestations of that power are at hand. The unity, internal and external, into which we have lately been brought, the power and success of our testimony to the world around, and the exigency of our situation in the midst of the raging enemies of faith enlarged our expectations and stimulated us to demand more strength from God. Some instances of the victory of faith over disease, which were notable to us though not to the world, occurred during the past winter and spring.

Soon after we came together in family unity Mrs. Cragin was attacked by disease of an obstinate and threatening character. This brought me into a necessity of examining our position in relation to sickness and death. I settled my own principles more thoroughly than ever before, and gave a course of lectures in which I declared my independence of the medical systems of this world and claimed for Christ the office of physician to our Community. There was but one heart and one voice among us. I treated Mrs. Cragin's case on faith principles and, though the struggle with the power of death was long and desperate, life gradually prevailed.

After Mrs. Hall returned to our fellowship I began to have a strong impression that the first signal manifestation of healing power would be in her case. The fact that she had come under my care several years ago and a cure had been commenced, which had been defeated for the time by evil powers, seemed a pledge of a complete work yet to come. Her connection with an infidel husband and an infidel father made her case just such an one as we might suppose God would choose if he wished to strike a death-blow at unbelief. From the time

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when she invited me to visit her I felt myself challenged to a public contest with death. I made up my mind not to go to her until I could go in the fullness of faith, and I had an assurance that my dealings with her at this time would not be like those of the former trial but altogether more swift and decisive.

Mrs. Cragin's case was still upon my hands. Her enemies, though often routed, yet persecuted her at times, and I found at last that the traitor who let them in was a subtle spirit in her of unbelief. It became evident that a decisive victory over unbelief was essential to a permanent victory over disease of any kind, forasmuch as unbelief is the protecting cover of all subordinate powers of evil. It also became evident that I could not reasonably expect to carry victory over unbelief abroad until I had obtained it at home. This then was the burden that lay upon my heart: I must lift Mrs. Cragin out of the grave of unbelief before I could hope to raise Mrs. Hall. Under this burden I labored a week. Faith was the subject of constant investigation in our meetings. On the 21st of June the contest with unbelief came to its crisis with Mrs. Cragin. In the evening meeting she testified that Christ had saved her forever from the unbelieving spirit. The next morning I saw that all was ready for a movement toward Mrs. Hall. Her sister was at our house and wished to be carried home. Mrs. Cragin and I went with her.

During the first half hour of our visit I gave a general discourse on faith. Then I called on Mrs. Cragin to speak. She had not proceeded far when she began to be pale and faint. I took her by the hand and supported her as she sank into death. I said to her several times in a loud voice, "Look at me." She heard me not. Her eyes were open, but fixed and glassy like a dead person's. I carried my head forward until my eye was in range with hers. At that moment there was a glimmer of recognition. I smiled, and she replied by a smile. Immedi-

## Cure of Harriet Hall

ately the deadly spell passed away, and Mrs. Cragin emerged into angelic life and beauty. This scene was afterwards repeated in a milder way.

When these transactions were finished, Mrs. Cragin and I placed ourselves in more immediate communication with Mrs. Hall by taking hold of her hands. I perceived that the power of unbelief was broken. Mrs. Hall declared with emphasis that she felt "something good" taking place in herself while Mrs. Cragin was dying. Up to this time I had no very definite idea of what was to be done for Mrs. Hall. The way seemed open for her release, but the circumstances in which I found myself were new and I shrank from anything like over-boldness or experimenting. I thought and spoke of returning home, and yet it seemed to me that she ought to go with me.

At length, as I walked the floor meditating, an omnipotent will began to infuse itself into my consciousness. I said in my heart with the freedom that goes with the power of realization, "God shall have his own way in this matter." Soon the way was naturally and easily opened for me to call her forth from her prison with full consciousness of the authority and coöperation of God. After she arose and while the women were changing her clothes I walked in another room, and then again felt an omnipotent will going forth from my heart that she should go home with me; which she did, as she has related.

### TESTIMONY OF DANIEL J. HALL

Putney, July 15, 1847.

Mr. G. W. Noyes.

*Sir:*

. . . Perhaps it may be proper in the first place to remark, that I cannot think there ever was an individual who attached less confidence to anything that savored of marvelousness than I did previous to the obvious manifestation of the power of



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God in restoring Mrs. Hall to health. . . . I was so completely wrapped up in unbelief after I had witnessed her truly wonderful cure, that I felt inclined for a while to ascribe it to some other cause and to think that it would be of short duration. But to my astonishment as well as to my unbounded gratification I have found that time has proved this idea to be fallacious; and I freely confess that it is the power of God that has raised her. I acknowledge also with gratitude, that the same power which has raised her from sickness has also saved me from misery and death. I no longer doubt the existence of God or the divine authenticity of the Bible.

From the foregoing statement of my convictions you are at liberty to draw such conclusions as in the sight of God you may deem most proper and profitable, and present them to the public through the columns of the *Magazine*.

Yours, etc.,

DANIEL J. HALL.

Mr. Hall afterward succumbed for a time to hostile influences. When the Putney Community was broken up in the fall of 1847 he was in sympathy with their enemies, and arranged to have Mrs. Hall live at Putney with her father, an infidel. She suffered a relapse, which Noyes attributed to the lack of an atmosphere of faith. Dr. David Allen took this occasion to prepare a statement of her case for publication in a book entitled *Noyesism Unveiled* by the Methodist minister of Putney, the Rev. Mr. Hubbard Eastman. Dr. Allen was described by the Rev. Mr. Eastman as "intelligent and highly respectable," Mrs. Hall's "principal attending physician, who had been familiar with her case from the very commencement."

TESTIMONY OF DR. DAVID ALLEN DECEMBER 28, 1848

Mrs. Harriet A. Hall in her early sickness was affected with a derangement of the liver and digestive organs generally, with a well-marked scrofulous habit of constitution. In this stage of debility by making considerable over-exertion she



## Cure of Harriet Hall

brought on an organic displacement, which prostrated her upon her bed, and with her early complaints and a highly sensitive nervous development was the cause of much suffering and protracted confinement. Subsequently there came on a scrofulous disease of the kidneys, which has since produced ulceration; and is now progressing in a regular course, and ever has been, apparently, to a fatal termination.

At the time Mrs. Hall first came out she had been for some time more comfortable; the system had become so far accommodated to the state of her disease, that she was able under a strong effort of the will to exercise for a time as she did. But, as might be expected, her essential symptoms of disease returned with about the same violence as before. Medical aid was again called for. Another period of more than two years' confinement and rest, with some appropriate remedies, enabled her again to rally for a time under the well-known power of a highly excited imagination, or mesmeric influence. But the reported cure seems after all to prove no cure. Her diseased kidneys and other debility have never been removed; and she is now, and has been for some time past entirely confined to her bed, an object of much suffering and pity. Apparently death will ere long relieve her of her sufferings.

Cases where individuals were raised from long confinement by a strong mental effort are comparatively frequent. The case of Miss Martineau . . . is in point. She reports herself as having been raised from a protracted confinement under somewhat similar circumstances by the influence of mesmerism, though she was destitute of the incipient disease that will doubtless in the event prove fatal to Mrs. Hall.

But Mr. Hall, who had returned to friendship with the Community, knew that imagination killed as well as cured. He had seen that under the imaginations of "Putney unbelief" Mrs. Hall suffered a relapse, and he hoped that under the imaginations of

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"Oneida faith" she might again recover. Consequently he took her to Oneida on a cot despite her father's prophecy that she would die before she arrived. By an irony of fate her father was later brought to Oneida on a cot, and she cared for him until he died. One year after her arrival she was a school-teacher in active service, pronounced by two physicians a healthy woman. She had recently returned from a visit to Putney with her husband, and had dined with Dr. Allen.

Mrs. Hall was a member of the Oneida Community for more than thirty years. The author remembers her, after the dissolution of the Community, as a somewhat delicate, elderly woman with weak eyes, but able most of the time to care for herself. She died in 1893 at the age of seventy-four.

## Chapter 26

### KNITTING OF EAST AND WEST

IN THE winter of 1846-7 there was a revival and a deep yearning for unity among the Perfectionists of Central New York. Cook's invitation and Noyes's visit to Syracuse commenced the movement. Meetings were held in different places. John B. Foot was the leader of a small congregation at Lairdsville, where he lived. Thither Burt, Gould and others repaired each Sunday. At one of the meetings Foot was appointed a delegate to Putney for the purpose of bringing about a union of the eastern and western divisions of Perfectionists. At the same time the Putney Perfectionists sent Cragin to Central New York on a similar errand.

GEORGE CRAGIN TO JOHN R. MILLER

Pulaski, New York, June 9, 1847.

*Dear Brother Miller:* . . .

I have had an opportunity of becoming considerably acquainted with Brother Cook. He is great in business. He can "beat them all concave," as he says, in selling goods. Woodward returned the other day from New York, and began to complain of the clerks, that they had not sold as many goods as they might, intimating that he could have sold more than all of them. Cook, who is always ready to face anybody, stepped up to Woodward and said, "I can sell three dollars to your one all day long, week in and week out." Woodward accepted the challenge, and Monday they had the trial. Woodward sold about twenty-five dollars' worth and Cook between eighty and ninety dollars'. . . But Cook says he is not contented there; it is too confining; he wants to be his own mas-

## The Putney Community

ter. I have been studying his character considerably during this visit, and I discover that he will need some working over before he will become fruitful in spiritual things. The other evening I had quite a talk with him on the subject of defects in our characters that must be overcome. He invited me to point out, if I could, any weaknesses in his character. He did not claim that he was free from them, but thought it was doubtful whether any one could see them but himself. I remarked that, unless I was greatly mistaken, I could point out a leak in his character; that he had a number of acquaintances among worldly persons who had an influence over his spirit, and in their presence his spiritual man was not allowed to have a place in the circle. It set him to thinking, but I was rather doubtful about its having any effect. On the whole I am satisfied that Cook possesses valuable material, and when he has been broken, hewn and polished he will be a strong man.

Yours in love,

G. CRAGIN.

GEORGE CRAGIN TO HARRIET A. NOYES, HARRIET H. SKINNER,  
AND MARY E. CRAGIN

Syracuse, New York, June 18, 1847.

*Dear Sisters:* . . .

I am bold in declaring to the believers here and wherever I have been, that Putney is the West Point Academy to educate officers and teachers. I see no better way to accomplish the subjugation of this State to God than to pick out those who possess the qualities that will fit them for such officers and send them to Putney to receive the necessary discipline. . . .

I am beginning to have some light skirmishes with Cook respecting the movements at Putney. A few days since, after hearing me read one of your letters about overcoming bashfulness, he said I could say to you that he was a little afraid you

## Knitting of East and West

might go to the other extreme and have too much liberty. I replied, when his confidence in Brother Noyes was as strong as mine he could have no fears on that ground. I would not allow him to compare our position with anything that he ever saw in this State. Neither he, I said, nor any one else in this State has ever been qualified to take the lead of Perfectionists. I plainly see that he is fastened to us in heart and cannot get away, though he thinks he has too much independence to cog in with our body. . . . He has been at the house several hours since dinner, and says he wants to be with me all the time. I just told him that he had so much fire and power in his character that it would be necessary for God to put him through a severe course of discipline before he would be a safe man in the field. I have become so well acquainted with him that I am free to say whatever I wish without giving offense. . . .

Robinson is inclined to reject the testimony he gave acknowledging John leader the Sabbath that John was here. This I learn from Cook. Well, I am not surprised, for I know that every one in this State must pass through the same trials that we have been through at Putney in order to be perfectly joined to John.

Yours in love,

G. CRAGIN.

GEORGE CRAGIN TO MRS. HARRIET A. NOYES

Syracuse, New York, June 30, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:* . . .

I left this place a week ago today, and after two hours' ride on the railway I found myself at Dr. Gould's. They seemed very glad to see me. The next day we started with a private team for East Hamilton, and arrived at Brother Ackley's in the evening. I took with me fifteen copies of *The Berean* to supply the subscribers in that vicinity. Daniel Nash and wife



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called to see us in the evening. They are in full fellowship with us. They kept me talking half the night. The next day we went to Hatch's. He was perfectly wild with delight to see me. . . .

On Sunday we had a meeting of the believers at Nash's. It was, I think, quite a profitable one. I talked considerably, and read to them the article, "Our Relations to the Primitive Church." I can say without hesitation, the body of believers in East Hamilton and vicinity are one with us. Hatch, Ackley and Nash are ready for marching orders under the command of J. H. Noyes.

It was our intention, when we left Oneida Depot, to visit Foot and others in Clinton and Lairdsville, but we could not get away from the brethren at East Hamilton till Monday morning, and Dr. Gould was obliged to be at home that day.

Ackley is a first-rate soldier. His wife is following hard after him. Nash is good, very teachable, has been faithful to the East ever since he came out seven years ago. He is altogether more teachable than his brother Seymour. Hatch will make a first-rate trumpeter in the war. He certainly possesses a wonderful talent for gaining the attention of people. When I was there two years ago I did not see his wife, and was fearful from what I heard that she would be a difficult case to manage. On becoming acquainted with her I was happily disappointed. I gained her confidence, and she opened her heart freely. The three families I have mentioned only need the benefit of the school at Putney a few years to make them useful in the army of God.

Hatch and others, while we were together last Sabbath, proposed to have a convention about the 10th of July again. I did not oppose it directly, but cautioned them against precipitancy; told them that God was now canvassing the whole State. "Yes," cried Hatch, "we are having a convention all the time. Cragin is the representative of the East, and he is holding

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a convention in every part of the State." That ended the matter.

The East Hamilton brethren are very anxious that I should visit Foot and other believers in that region. When we have taken that fort, the whole State is ours.

On my return to Gould's Monday night I found your letter, which was very exhilarating to my wearied spirit. It was tedious to be in company with Gould. He needs a resurrection as much as any one. I feel that I have got to make war upon him. . . .

Yesterday morning I took a letter from the office from Mary Mabie. Feeling quite anxious to see Abbott, I took the cars in the afternoon and arrived here at six. Abbott left the night before. I felt a great responsibility in relation to his case as soon as I read Mary's letter. Last night I rolled the burden upon Christ, and this morning I felt relieved and my mind clear. I sat down and wrote him a long letter. I have put him on trial till next winter. . . . If then he gave evidence that he was clothed in his right mind, we would take the question of his moving to Putney into consideration. No one gets to Putney by my agency without paying the full price, namely, confiscating the personal pronoun and branding soul and body "national property."

The miracle on Harriet Hall will produce a tremendous shock. Cook read that part of the letter to two of the clerks in the store. He said it made them turn pale. When I read it to Gould, it knocked concave for the time being his eternally doubting, damning spirit, that is always pushing its horns against faith. Methinks I hear the knell of unbelief already sending its dolorous sound through this whole region.

Cook says he is going to write John to stop his magnetic operations upon him, or he will have to quit the store. Every time that I fetch round here he becomes sick with his business

## The Putney Community

and unfit for anything. He says, when he gets through his year with Woodward he will want three months for repentance.

Yours, G. C.

WILLIAM H. COOK TO NOYES

Syracuse, New York, July 2, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

My soul is full and running over this morning with love and glory. . . . I have had a longing desire to see you all at Putney, and if I were differently circumstanced should do so. . . .

David Wilder called on me this morning. . . . I said that the time was past for quarrelling among those who were called of God, and that I considered myself one with the Putney folks; that this was the center from which I expected the light and glory of the gospel to go forth; that I felt you were just right, and were now presenting a bold front to the armies of hell. . . .

I think your visit at this place last winter will eternally tell. I sometimes feel as though it is utterly impossible for me to sell goods any longer, but that I want to be off. I want to stand right out in the street and holler: "Whoo-rah! We have come. We are here. Clear the track." . . . So you see I am like a horse harnessed for the fight. All I want is the rider to say: "Go!" But at present I am strongly checked in.

Brother George Cragin is gone to Owasco. He is first-rate and a little better. A few more of the same sort would not be out of place. His advice to Abbott was good.

And now my business, rather that of Arnold Woodward, is calling me, and I must draw to a close by saying, take care of yourself and yours. We hear good things of you.

Yours in love,

WM. H. COOK.

## Knitting of East and West

GEORGE CRAGIN TO NOYES

Lairdsville, New York, July 10, 1847.

*Dear Brother:*

I came to Brother Foot's house last evening expecting to hear through him from Putney. I learned however that he had gone to Putney and had not returned. I at once saw that God was making a move for bombarding this castle. Mrs. Foot wished to know what I thought would be the result of his visit. Said I: "Reconciliation with Noyes." I made up my mind that I would not move from this place until Foot's return. This evening about ten o'clock Foot came in, and the moment I got hold of his hand I knew all was right with you. He said he had a first-rate visit, and the night before he left was reconciled to you. My spirit of war was turned into love, and as he began to relate the account of his visit I began to rejoice, and nothing but the fear of waking up the children prevented me from shouting worse than a Methodist. Now the State is ours. Glory to God, "who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ." We can now prepare for organizing disciplinary schools in our own way.

After dancing around the room awhile I told Foot my mission here for the present was accomplished. I made up my mind several weeks ago that I would not look toward Putney until this fort was taken. Foot says it was well he put off for Putney to make his peace with you before I came here. . . .

I attended the meeting yesterday. School-house well filled. After most of the people had assembled, in came Alexander Wilder, Clerk of the church. Brother Foot asked me whether he had better read the allusion to Wilder in the interesting document he brought from Putney relating to the recovery of Mrs. Cragin and Harriet Hall. I told him I thought he had. He said he thought so too. Brother Foot then opened the meet-



## The Putney Community

ing by making a few remarks upon a passage of Scripture, after which he gave quite a full account of his visit to Putney, including his leaving and going back and finally his reconciliation with you. Then he stated that he had the testimony of three witnesses to the recovery of Mrs. Hall; and that the testimony of Mrs. Hall cast some reflections upon one of their number present. I sat fronting Wilder, and his countenance as Foot began to read betrayed the working of a hellish spirit within. I then addressed the meeting, and had great liberty in speaking. Brother Burt spoke to the point, also Charles Lovett. Afterward Wilder took the floor, assuming one of his most exquisite attitudes. He declared himself independent, the line was drawn, quoting Scripture from Job. He was under great excitement, and as a whole it was one of the most foolish, nonsensical speeches that a sane man ever uttered. He probably thought I would reply, as he had called the document that had been read a lie. But I left the speech to its own refutation, and no notice was taken of it by others. All present said it was an excellent meeting. I was introduced to all the believers in that section, and was greeted with much affection, receiving invitations to visit them all. Wilder after the meeting handed the church records to Foot, but did not speak to him.

The document on Harriet Hall which Foot brought with him from Putney was a bombshell that did great execution. They were all much delighted with the idea of your coming here this fall to attend conventions.

Yours,

GEO. CRAGIN.

These interchanges opened the way for two important Perfectionist conventions in Central New York the following fall.

The first of these was called by John B. Foot, and notice was given in the *The Spiritual Magazine*. It assembled on the 3rd of September 1847 at the Baptist Meeting-house in Lairds-



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ville, Oneida County, New York, and continued three days. Delegates were present from most of the Perfectionist colonies in the State of New York. Also the Perfectionists at Newark, New Jersey, were represented by William R. Inslee; and those at Putney, Vermont, by John H. Noyes and Harriet A. Noyes.

At the opening session John B. Foot stated that his objects in calling the Convention were acquaintance of believers with each other, acknowledgment of each other, and coöperation. He mentioned his invitation to Noyes and the Community at Putney, and expressed a desire that the meeting might result in unity of east and west.

Jonathan Burt was chosen Moderator, and William H. Cook Secretary.

After some further remarks on the subject of union, Charles Jones of Deruyter made a long speech against "fussing and fixing things for God to do." He called Noyes's name in question, and this brought on a discussion of Noyes's character and position. The majority expressed themselves as satisfied with Noyes's claims.

In the afternoon it was proposed that Noyes should preach. He consented, and preached from this: "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." While Noyes was speaking Alexander Wilder and Dr. Lee stalked in. Soon afterward Wilder and Jones went out together and engaged in private conversation. Jones then returned and launched a terrific tirade on the cure of Harriet Hall. He was not answered at the time, but many said that they abhorred his spirit.

In the evening at a gathering in Foot's house Noyes said that he thought Jones's story must have arisen from the fact that Mrs. Cragin was concerned in the cure. The next morning when the meeting opened Foot spoke of Jones's accusations. He said he did not usually take notice of such persons, but he

## The Putney Community

felt called to testify of the people at Putney, that he saw nothing while among them that savored of licentiousness. Next Dr. Gould, after intimating that exceptions might be taken to one of those concerned in this miracle, said that he was personally acquainted with her, and if ever there was true repentance it was in her case. Mr. Inslee followed to the same effect. Noyes then said that, as allusion had been made to Mrs. Cragin, he would advise any one who wished to know her to read her articles in *The Spiritual Magazine* for the last year; that she had passed through this suffering not for herself alone but for others; and that in his opinion she was now one of the most spiritual of the Putney women.

Just at this time, when there was unanimity of feeling throughout the meeting, in came together Dr. Lee, Alexander Wilder and Charles Jones. The latter commenced speaking as soon as there was an opening. Although he apologized for his speech the night before, yet he reiterated the charge of licentiousness. The Moderator attempted to silence him, but without avail. Finally Foot brought in a resolution stating that the primary object of the Convention was "to facilitate acquaintance and promote union between believers at Putney and those in the State of New York," and requesting each one who favored that object to enroll as a member. Jones refused to enroll and left. Dr. Lee went home at noon, and Alexander Wilder at the end of the day.

After the roll was taken the following resolutions, brought in by Otis Sanford, were unanimously passed:

1. Resolved, That we recognize written and printed testimony as a valuable auxiliary of the spirit of life.
2. Resolved, That we heartily approve of the general course of the press at Putney, and believe it to be an appointed and useful agency of God.
3. Resolved, That we will coöperate with the brethren at

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Putney by circulating their publications, procuring subscriptions, and furnishing means and matter for the paper.

After the close of the meetings Otis Sanford in consequence of learning that Noyes was the author of the Battle-Axe Letter, which he had never seen before, retracted his assent to these resolutions.

During the remainder of its session the Convention discussed particularly the necessity and exceeding value of unity, and the idea that holiness of heart, which had been the chief interest hitherto, must now go forth into the outward man and take possession of the body and of the world. In the afternoon of the last day David A. Warren discoursed at length on the elementary principles of salvation from sin, and Noyes followed with a sketch of the consequences to which salvation from sin must lead: the admission of the Primitive Church into this world, association, community of interests, victory over death, the reign of God.

The other Convention was called by John B. Foot and John Corwin through *The Spiritual Magazine*. It met at Genoa, Cayuga County, New York, on Friday the 17th of September 1847, and continued three days. Delegates from all parts of the State were present, besides John H. Noyes and Harriet A. Noyes from Putney.

William H. Cook was appointed Moderator, and William C. Gould Secretary.

After a day of informal conversation and preliminary addresses, the following statement was adopted as the preamble of the roll:

"The object of this Convention is to bring together Perfectionists, particularly the eastern and western divisions, for the purpose of acquaintance, acknowledgment of each other, and coöperation."

After the roll was made, a Committee consisting of Noyes,

## The Putney Community

Edward Palmer 2nd, John B. Foot, John Corwin and William H. Cook reported two series of resolutions. The first was the series passed at the Lairdsville Convention expressing approbation of the Putney publications. These were discussed and unanimously passed. The second series of resolutions was as follows :

1. Resolved, That we will devote ourselves exclusively to the establishment of the Kingdom of God ; and as that kingdom includes and provides for all interests, religious, political, social and physical, we will not join or coöperate with any other organization.

2. Resolved, That, as the Kingdom of God is to have an external manifestation, and as that manifestation must be in some form of association, we will acquaint ourselves with the principles of heavenly association, and train ourselves to conformity with them as fast as possible.

3. Resolved, That one of the leading principles of heavenly association is the renunciation of exclusive claim to private property.

4. Resolved, That it is expedient immediately to take measures for forming a heavenly association in Central New York.

5. Resolved, That William H. Cook be authorized on our behalf to visit Perfectionists throughout the State for the purpose of stirring up their minds in relation to association and ascertaining the amount of men and means that are in readiness for the enterprise.

6. Resolved, That William H. Cook, Jonathan Burt, Edward Palmer 2nd, John B. Foot, Joshua Phelps, John Corwin, William C. Gould, Zenas Havens, Philo Gilbert, Joseph C. Ackley, Edward M. Palmer, William Jones be a Committee of Twelve on our behalf to prepare plans, and make arrangements for a future convention of those who are found ready for action.



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A free and animated discussion followed, and at the end of the day the entire series of resolutions was passed without a dissenting voice.

Sunday was given up mainly to free testimony and devotional exercises. In the afternoon Noyes addressed believers, urging them to enlist in the army of heaven, substitute Christ for death, make no excuses to him on account of worldly engagements, but face the furnace prepared for them by the prince of this world as Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego faced the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. This discourse was followed by a full surrender of many hearts to the present call of Christ. With great fervor the strongest men of the Convention came forward and pledged "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor" for the enterprise of establishing the Kingdom of God in this world.

After the Lairdsville Convention Noyes said privately that he would contribute a thousand dollars toward an Association of the Putney type in Central New York. There was however at this time no thought of giving up the Putney Community. On the contrary the plan was that Putney should be primarily a publishing Community, and that the Central New York Association should engage in some profitable industry and support the press. Two possible sites for the New York Association were talked of before Noyes left Lairdsville, John B. Foot's farm at Lairdsville and Jonathan Burt's Indian sawmill near Oneida. Noyes thought that the latter would be chosen, though he had never been there. The fact that Mrs. Burt was an unbeliever stood in the way. But Mr. Burt had prevailed on his wife to attend one of the sessions at Lairdsville, and Noyes after meeting her expressed the conviction that she would be converted and that her conversion could be taken as a sign that God would prosper an Association on the Indian sawmill site.



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HOW I CAME INTO POSSESSION OF THE INDIAN SAWMILL

BY JONATHAN BURT

In the fall of 1834 Chauncey E. Dutton, a young man who had been associated with Mr. Noyes at New Haven, came to Chittenango, where I then resided. He preached Christ in us a whole savior, and faith the only condition on our part. I was startled by this doctrine; it swept my own works all by the board. At first I was disposed to challenge its truth. I followed Dutton from the meeting to his stopping-place and engaged him in argument, but before leaving him I was convinced. The next day I made a public confession of Christ in me a present and everlasting savior from all sin. Following this confession a spirit of quiet joy and peace came upon me, which I had never before experienced.

The third day after my conversion Dutton gave me a copy of *The Perfectionist*, which contained Mr. Noyes's theory of the second coming of Christ. I read it with great attention, and finished just before dinner, which I had taken with me as usual to the shop where I worked. While sitting upon a bench eating and at the same time musing upon what I had read, I said in my heart, "It is the truth, every word of it." Immediately something like an electric spark struck the top of my head and spread a quickening glow through every part of my body. My mind was illuminated to understand the Bible as I had never understood it before. I wanted to share my all with God's people. I had long been praying for the millennium; it now seemed to me that the dawn had commenced.

In the fall of 1845 Mr. E—— S—— invited me to a partnership in the purchase of what was called the Indian sawmill near Oneida. He was noted as one of the earliest New York Perfectionists and, though I had but little acquaintance with

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him, I held him in high esteem as a man of faith and spiritual experience. . . . With these considerations I resolved to accept the proposal provided I could sell my property at Chittengo. Very soon a young physician came into town proposing to settle, and found my place just the one that suited him. It cost me about \$1800, and I sold it for \$900. With this sum however I was able to pay for my share of the sawmill and purchase a forty-acre timber lot. I got possession of the mill in September, thoroughly repaired it, built me a house and moved into it in January 1846.

My winter's work in felling trees and getting the logs to the mill was a heavy tax on my energies, so that in the spring I found myself quite prostrated. During my sickness the spring freshet carried away our dam. All things seemed to be against me, and I became considerably discouraged. I gradually recovered my health however, and was able to resume business in the course of the summer.

But meanwhile I had awakened to the fact that I had not bettered my condition by the change I had made. . . . I felt as though God was frowning on my circumstances, and I resolved to get out of them in some way.

My own means were all invested in the mill and wood-lot, and I had incurred a considerable debt. . . . To buy out Mr. S—— would increase my debt more than I could carry. On the other hand his only offer was to take my half interest and give me a mortgage as security.

About this time my brother Horace was discharged from the Worcester insane hospital, and came on a visit to me. On learning the state of things he proposed to have his property sold and the proceeds used to purchase Mr. S——'s share of the mill; and I entered into an arrangement with Mr. S—— to buy or sell at a stipulated price for cash, agreeing upon a time long enough ahead, as I supposed, to give ample opportunity

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to accomplish my object. However we were one day behind the time agreed upon, and I had to give him one hundred dollars extra to get the property.

During the interval between the two Conventions Noyes visited some of the leading New York Perfectionists and outlined to them confidentially his understanding of the sexual implications of salvation from sin. Consequently there were whisperings and questionings. Mrs. John B. Foot and Mrs. Otis Sanford wrote privately to William H. Cook that they had no doubt promiscuity was the order of the day at Putney. They urged him to sift the matter to the bottom, and proposed that he should call another convention in which such practices should be reprobated. This communication did not prevent Cook's accepting the chairmanship of the Genoa Convention and becoming the special executive agent of the Committee of Twelve charged with forming plans for a "heavenly association" in Central New York.

"After the lapse of several weeks," writes Jonathan Burt, "Mr. Cook issued a call for a meeting of the Committee of Twelve at Manlius. Only a part of the Committee attended. Mr. Cook laid before those present a plan for an Association in Syracuse. He was a salesman in a flourishing store there, and evidently had an ambition to manage a great mercantile business as a basis for support. The plan was not favorably regarded, and with that meeting all action of the Committee as a body ended."

Individual members of the Committee however continued to work toward Association. William C. Gould soon after the Manlius meeting went to Putney to study Noyes's Community on the ground. He remained about a month, and was there at the break-up. Joseph C. Ackley commenced early in October a semi-communistic arrangement with two other families, those of William S. Hatch and Daniel P. Nash, of Beaver Meadow. John B. Foot offered his farm at Lairdsville as a site for the Association. "Come on, beloved, with all your effects," he wrote October 17th to the Beaver Meadow group, "and we will go the heavenly road together. Otis Sanford offers to rent me his half of the farm for five years at less than the former rent. This will give us room, and our trades and callings will give us business. Let us hear from you soon." This plan also fell through. But nothing could stop the forces loosed at the Genoa Convention. Two weeks later the first steps were taken toward a concentration of New York Perfectionists around Burt's Indian sawmill near Oneida.

## Chapter 27

### CASE OF MARY KNIGHT

THE cure of Harriet Hall stimulated the Putney Perfectionists to expect even greater victories over disease. In August 1847 Mr. Knight, a neighbor, made a strong appeal in behalf of his daughter Mary, a young woman apparently in the last stage of tuberculosis. The sympathy of the Perfectionists was deeply aroused and they finally consented to undertake her care.

Her conditions at home were unfavorable to health. Surrounded by active disbelievers, she was subject to constant suggestions of sickness and death. On August 15th Miller took her to ride despite the warnings of her family and friends. She returned refreshed. With her father's consent she was removed to one of the Perfectionists' houses, where she was surrounded by strong suggestions of health and cheer. When Noyes left with his wife to attend the Perfectionist conventions in Central New York, Mary seemed on the road to recovery. Dr. Campbell, who called on Mr. Knight the next evening, said that he "guessed the Perfectionists would fetch her." That night she slept quietly after a three hours' ride, and awoke "bright, smart and docile."

It was thought best to exclude visitors until Mary was stronger. Her father, of course, came often, but her sister Laura, who stole in once and spread a charge of neglect, was asked not to come again. The next day, following a call from her mother, her sister Laura and a friend, Mary experienced a great weakening of confidence. Immediately her disease took a turn for the worse. Burnham, who watched with her that night, said that he had to exert all the power he possessed forty times over to keep her from sinking into death. Those who had the care of her felt that they must shut out unbelieving spirits or lose the battle. Accordingly no visitors, not even her own family, were admitted the next day. In addition to this precaution Burnham, Miller and Mrs. Cragin went to the Upper House and fired a heavy broadside against un-



## The Putney Community

belief, which they said they felt in individual members. Also Mrs. Cragin told Mary frankly, that her family, the doctors, the ministers and the people of the village had condemned her to death, and said it was for her to choose whether she would join with the world or stand with the Perfectionists. She chose the latter course, and when visitors came (for they could not any longer be excluded) she testified that she was well. Skinner wrote to Noyes that the whole body of believers felt committed, that they were driven to stake their all on the promises of Christ, and that unbelief in a single individual might paralyze the whole. After that the four who had the chief care of Mary said that their faith reached below death, and it would not shake them in the least to see her sink into Hades. They felt that the great thing God designed to accomplish was not to astound and influence the world, but to bring about a state of perfect union among believers. This point, they agreed, was being rapidly approached.

When Dr. Campbell learned the measures that were being taken, he came out with the statement that the Perfectionists were "going too fast," were "crazy," "the Kingdom of God had not come." Miller indignant sought an interview. For half an hour he talked with the Doctor more severely than he ever talked with a man in his life, though he told him sincerely that he never loved a man as he had loved him. He said that the Doctor was the Perfectionists' worst enemy, because he stood on the world's side while he professed to be their friend; that God had offered him the greatest blessing in his power to give; that he had refused it, and that now God would make his own terms. The Doctor flared up twice, but Miller "struck him so quickly that he cooled down again." Three times the Doctor offered to confess publicly his belief in salvation from sin. But salvation from sin was not now enough—Bible Communism had already been secretly inaugurated. Miller rejected the offer. The Doctor, heretofore verging slowly toward membership, now took his place permanently among the Putney irreconcilables.

Meanwhile Mary lingered along with every symptom of dissolution upon her. Mrs. Cragin wrote to Noyes that God had infused into the Community a spirit of earnestness and quiet waiting. Resurrection power, she added, enabled her to do with little sleep and to perform for Mary offices which nothing else could carry her through.

On September 2nd Mrs. Cragin wrote: "I am sitting near Mary, who has breathed her last. Mr. Miller and I supported her through the valley, which was anything but dark. We were unmoved, and



## Case of Mary Knight

called upon Death to do his worst. We are still fully persuaded that we shall see the glory of God. Christ will take care of his honor and ours, which are one. The assistants are coming in to deck her for the grave. I shall leave them to perform, as it is not in my line to wait on death."

And Burnham wrote to Harriet A. Noyes: "The final result was not as we anticipated. There is manifestly some mystery in the case. My own consciousness of union with Christ is too strong to admit of serious doubts . . . I should like to see Mr. Noyes, and yet my confidence and patience are almost without a limit. I know that God is with us and that we shall prevail. Community about us are a little more quiet, but their rage is great."

Four days after Mary's death Mrs. Cragin gave birth to twins, Victor and Victoria. Mrs. Achsah Campbell acted as midwife, and no physician was employed. Victoria lived but a few days.

MRS. CRAGIN TO MRS. NOYES

Putney, September 10, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:*

I thought before I was sick that I should have an easy time and get right up. Instead I had a hard time and now sit up very little. But I am perfectly satisfied. Nobody has heard me say, I shall die, for my faith has never wavered, not even when Death was staring me in the face. Mr. Miller and Mr. Cragin have been and are the kindest of brothers to me, and all the household are anxious to do me good. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." . . .

My heart is with you both, and my thoughts sleeping and waking wander off and bring you before me hourly. How glad I shall be to see you!

Affectionately yours,

MARY E. CRAGIN.

NOYES TO MILLER

Genoa, N. Y., September 16, 1847.

*Dear Brother Miller:*

We have just arrived, and found three letters from home informing us of many interesting events. I am disposed to

## The Putney Community

comment a little on the death of Mary Knight, as her case seems to labor most.

My view is that God authorized us to take her and preach Christ to her, and that he enabled us again and again to stay the hand of death and renew her strength, but that he did not authorize us to prophesy her final recovery. Faith for present action is one thing, and faith for prophecy is another. Christ healed the sick, but we do not find him prophesying that they would not be sick afterward. . . . I never did feel authorized to prophesy the result in Mary's case, as I have told Harriet many times since I left home. But I was willing others should prophesy, if they had faith for it, and I hoped that God had given those, who did speak assuredly of the future, more faith than he had given me. The event shows that God did not give the faith of prophecy, and we were not authorized by him to stake the credit of his kingdom on the issue of her life or death. The mistake was made under the temptations of benevolence, hope and patriotism. We need not worry about it. God has given us a lesson, and if we are good scholars the jeers of the world will not hurt us. . . . There is time enough for our work. One battle does not decide a campaign. God changes not, and our partnership with him is not broken or weakened. We shall see his glory and the confusion of his enemies.

I am glad to see the matter end in your turning from objective to subjective profit, from victory over the enemy to union among yourselves. This is a real victory. God be praised for it.

You can guess how much I love you all, and how I long to be with you.

Yours truly,

JOHN H. NOYES.

## Chapter 28

### THE GAGE OF BATTLE

STATEMENT BY NOYES IN *The Spiritual Magazine*

SEPTEMBER 1, 1847

**I**F I have failed in my previous remarks to draw the distinction between actual salvation and that credit system of religion which consists principally in hope, I will do so now by presenting a few clear and positive tests from the Bible. I believe that all hopes and pretensions of salvation will at last stand or fall by these tests:

1. Whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 1 John 3:6.

2. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? Col. 2:20.

3. These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Mark 16: 17-18.

THE REV. MR. HUBBARD EASTMAN, METHODIST CLERGYMAN  
AT PUTNEY, TO THE EDITOR OF *The Spiritual Magazine*

Putney, Vermont, September 28, 1847.

*Mr. Editor:*

In your paper of September 1st a few passages are quoted by your contributor, J. H. N., and laid down as the test by

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which all professed Christians are to be tried. . . . Are modern Perfectionists willing to be tried by this standard? . . . Passing by other points, Have they the gift of healing? If so, then diseases of every description, whether chronic or acute, whether in an incipient or advanced stage, are subject to their control. And the person diseased must be made every whit whole to prove a real miracle. And if all the signs mentioned are to follow, or rather accompany every true believer in all ages, then no person can justly lay claim to evangelical faith who cannot perform these wonderful works. . . . Can Perfectionists do these works?

NOYES IN *The Spiritual Magazine* OCTOBER 15, 1847

To the question whether "modern Perfectionists are willing to be tried by this standard," we answer on behalf of all with whom we are connected, yes. But let it here be premised that the truth of the standard does not depend on the issue of our trial. If we should fail to substantiate our claim to miraculous endowments, still the word of Christ will stand and will condemn the faith of all churches not endowed with miraculous power. "Let God be true and every man a liar."

It must also be premised that we do not accept our inquisitor's rule of interpreting and applying the test of Christ. He says, "The language of the passage under consideration is plain and unequivocal." So say we. But that language by no means authorizes the inferences which he has drawn from it, and which enable him to set before us such a hopeless job of proof. "These signs shall follow them that believe." Here is no specification or fair ground of inference that all the signs shall attend every individual believer at all times. The plain, unequivocal meaning is that the various signs of miraculous power shall follow the body of true believers, and the specific distribution of those signs both with reference to persons and

## The Gage of Battle

times is left undetermined. The intent of the rule, so far as this distribution is concerned, is to be ascertained by reference to the facts in the Primitive Church. That church was a genuine embodiment of the faith of Christ. The signs promised to "them that believe" followed it; and its history is a fair commentary on the rule. We accept that commentary, and hold ourselves bound to make out a case substantially like that of the Primitive Church or surrender all pretensions of being a true Christian church. But our inquisitor requires us to make out a case which the Primitive Church could not, nor even Christ himself.

In the first place Mr. Eastman's requirement that the test apply separately to each individual believer is at variance with the facts in the Primitive Church. In 1 Cor. 12:4-30 we have a sketch of the actual distribution of the several gifts of the Spirit in that church. Paul says: "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another faith; to another gifts of healing; to another working of miracles; to another prophecy;" and he asks, "Are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues?" Paul's general theory, as set forth in that chapter and elsewhere, is that the church is a unit, and that the gifts or signs belong to it as such and not to each separate member. To every fair mind this interpretation commends itself as entirely accordant with the language of Christ's promise.

But to come to particulars, Mr. Eastman asks whether Perfectionists can drink deadly poison without injury. If this power must be substantiated by specific facts before we can admit a church within the rule, then the Primitive Church and Christ himself must be cut off; for there is no evidence that Christ or any of his followers in the apostolic age ever made the experiment of drinking deadly poisons.



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Again, Mr. Eastman asks whether Perfectionists are "proof against the poisonous fangs of the venomous serpent." Now every one who is familiar with the Bible knows that there is but one instance in which this power was substantiated in the Primitive Church, namely, that of Paul. Previous to that instance Christ and all his followers might have been challenged to prove their faith by this sign as triumphantly as Perfectionists are challenged now. When Perfectionism has lived thirty years (the length of time from the ministry of Christ to the sign in the case of Paul), if a single instance of victory over serpent-poison cannot be found among us, it will be time to think of setting us aside as being out of the primitive rule of faith.

It is apparent then that Mr. Eastman's screw of rigorous interpretation has been turned upon us too far, and must fly back or the Primitive Church will be pinched with us. Two of the signs mentioned in Christ's promise were certainly rare in the apostolic age, and that simply because there were few proper occasions for them. If primitive believers had been under the necessity of drinking poisons or suffering the bite of serpents daily, doubtless the instances of miraculous impunity would have been as frequent as the instances of the other signs. But God did not go out of his way to make occasions for the sake of gratifying sign-seekers.

The principle thus established, that signs are not to be expected without regard to occasions, must be applied to the gift of tongues. Christ never spoke in an unknown tongue. Why? Because his ministry was confined to a single nation, and he had no occasion. When there were proper occasions, as on the day of Pentecost when strangers were gathered at Jerusalem from many nations, and in the foreign missions of the apostles, this sign attended the church. Our answer then to

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the call for this gift is that we are not in circumstances which make occasion for it.

As to the power of casting out devils, inasmuch as devils according to the Bible are the cause of all maladies both of body and soul, this gift may manifest itself either in healing disease or in saving from sin. We are sure in our own minds that we have this power in both its forms. But since the healing of disease is more palpable than a change of character we shall for the purpose of proof confine the argument to the question of our power to cure disease.

But before going to trial on this issue we must still further correct Mr. Eastman's theory of miracles by appeal to reason. He says, "If Perfectionists have the gift of healing, then diseases of every description, whether chronic or acute, incipient or advanced are subject to their control." This statement certainly needs some modification. It is clear that God has entire control of all diseases in all stages. But the power of God is one thing and his will to exert it another. If we forget this, we shall not be able to account for the fact that deaths occurred in the Primitive Church. . . . Again, the power of those who have the gift of healing is limited not only by the discretion of God, but also by the degree of their own faith, and by the degree of faith in the patient and those around him.

To complete our criticism of Mr. Eastman's philosophy of miracles we must now put his concluding dogma into the Bible-crucible. "The person diseased," he says, "must be made every whit whole to prove a real miracle." This assertion is not supported by reason. If God apportions the gift of healing according to his own discretion, he may give power sufficient for relief in cases where faith is insufficient for a perfect cure. . . .

We will now proceed to the trial of Perfectionists. Facts which properly belong to the evidence have been occurring

## The Putney Community

among these people in great numbers during the last fourteen years. A few only of those facts have been recorded, but we can furnish the patient inquirer with a number of appropriate references. [Here follow a dozen references to the Perfectionist publications.]

With regard to the Perfectionist Association in this town, numbering about forty persons, it is to be noted that during the nine years of its existence not a single death of an adult has occurred among them. During the same period the average population of the town has been about fourteen hundred, and the average number of adult deaths about twenty-four per year. We have paid no part of this tax to the king of terrors, though our due proportion would have been six or seven deaths. . . .

Instances of healing by faith have been numerous among us. My own case deserves to be recorded. In consequence of long and loud speaking and the wear and tear of a laborious life I contracted in 1842 a disease of the throat and lungs which deprived me of the use of my voice in public and rendered ordinary conversation painful. At first I listened to friends and physicians so far as to make some slight experiments of medication. But I obtained no help in this way, and finally, in the face of Dr. John Campbell's warning, I gave up my case to the sole treatment of Christ. I grew worse till September 1845, and at that time had abundant external reason to expect a speedy death. When the symptoms were at the worst, Christ advised me to neglect my disease. I did so, and entered upon a course of new and severe labor with my voice in meetings and in conversation. From that time I have been substantially well.

The case of Mrs. Fanny Leonard is well known. About a year ago after the birth of a child she began to decline. Her friends had little hope of her recovery. In March of the pres-

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ent year there was a general persuasion in our Community that she would be healed by the power of God. As that persuasion rose she still sank. At length the crisis of faith and of her disease came together. She received strength at the very time when our faith predicted it, and she received it by the laying on of hands. She has been visibly improving ever since, and is now a healthy woman.

The case of Mrs. Mary E. Cragin has already been described.

John R. Miller has long been subject to severe attacks of headache. On one of these occasions last summer I went into his room and found him in great suffering. I laid my hand on his head, and told him to shake off the Devil. He arose at once perfectly free from pain, and has not been troubled with this disease since.

These are examples of a great mass of experience which has been accumulating among us without attracting much notice from the world around. We will now take up two cases which have stood forth more directly before the public eye.

The cure of Mrs. Harriet Hall is as unimpeachable as any of the miracles of the Primitive Church. It is notorious that she had been sick eight years, that at the time of the miracle she was completely bed-ridden and almost blind, lying in nearly total darkness. From this state she was raised instantly by the laying on of hands and by the word of command into strength which enabled her to walk, to face the sun, to ride miles without inconvenience but with excessive pleasure. The afterthought of unbelief, that her sickness was a sham, is a gross abuse not only of her but of her family and the physicians who had attended her. The ascription of her cure to animal magnetism is a shift by which any of the miracles of Christ might be explained away with equal plausibility. These subterfuges were hardly thought of when the case was fresh



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in the public mind. How many said, "If Harriet Hall only holds out, we will believe!" She has held out, and is daily walking your streets. How many of you have kept your promise? Mr. Hall, her husband, is the only man (to his honor be it said) who has redeemed his pledge by acknowledging the power of God and embracing Perfectionism.

A conversation in Miller's store shows the strength of the facts that pressed at first on all minds. Mr. Baker said, that he could not understand how Mrs. Hall after having been so long in a dark room, to say nothing of the disease in her eyes, could at once face the light of open day without suffering. "For," said he, "after being a short time in her room I could not myself go out into the light without trouble." He put the case to Dr. Campbell. The Doctor hummed. Mr. Baker set the problem before him again and again and pressed for a solution. At last the Doctor answered: "Why don't you surrender then?" A few moments later he added in my presence: "It is time for us old sinners to surrender."

"But," say the scorners, "Mary Knight died on your hands, and her death outweighs all your other facts." Men and brethren, Mary Knight's case has not gone to the jury yet. You have heard the pleadings on one side. Let the other side now speak.

Suppose this case to have been as complete a failure as it has been represented. It was no worse a failure than that described in Mark 9:17, when the disciples undertook to cast out the arch-devil; and that failure did not nullify their commission nor discredit the cures which they had previously performed.

But a simple statement of facts will place this affair in a still more favorable light. Mary Knight, a young woman not connected with the Perfectionists, not professing religion, surrounded by unbelieving friends, was in the last agonies of



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consumption, given up by her physicians. Her father in these circumstances requested me once and again to call upon her. I went with him to her bedside, and said at the outset that I did not profess to be a physician, and could not take the responsibility of her case, but that I could recommend her to Christ as a successful physician of the body as well as the soul. Soon afterward John R. Miller took her to ride, and contrary to the forebodings of her friends his faith sustained her and she returned invigorated. The next day, seeing that her father was disposed to place her under our care, I said to her in the presence of her friends: "Your room is small and near the street. We have a room in our 'hospital,' a retired house, where you will be much more comfortable than here. That room is at your service. You will certainly have as good a chance to live there as here, and if you cannot live it will be a pleasant place to die in. We will nurse you and do our best to save you." I made this offer after deliberately counting the cost. I had no special confidence that she would live, and I knew, if she should die on our hands, we would be disgraced as we have been. But I said in my heart: "No fear of the cruel mockings of those who watch for evil shall hinder me from doing a simple act of kindness which is fairly set before me. Let the consequences be what they may, I will do as I would be done by." She was conveyed to the "hospital," and Mrs. Achsah Campbell, the widow of a physician and an unusually successful nurse, undertook the care of her. I visited her frequently during the ensuing ten days. My spirit was brought into several severe contests with her disease, and the presence of the power of God was manifest in the results. Mrs. Campbell is not inclined to fanatical faith, and is certainly sagacious in regard to the symptoms of the sick. She says that she saw in that time a miracle which no subsequent reverse can efface from her mind, that every symptom of Mary's dis-

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ease was subdued. Dr. Campbell sent word at one time, that if her pulse was between eighty and ninety beats per minute, she was getting better. I counted her pulse, and found it eighty-six. After witnessing a distressing drawback caused, as Mary herself declared, by a protracted visit from an unbelieving friend, I said to Mr. Knight the day before I left town: "The success of our treatment depends entirely on the faith of the patient and those around; and if we are not at liberty to shut her off from unbelieving friends, you might as well take her home to die, for die she will." He gave us the liberty we demanded. The next day at the time of my departure her pulse was eighty and she was riding abroad meeting her friends with a joyful smile and declaring herself well. While on my way to New York I wrote that her case was like a tie in Congress, where the Speaker has the casting vote, that she would live or die according to her own faith and testimony. So much for my agency in the case.

Of what took place after I left it is sufficient to say, that Mary soon began to decline from her confidence, that her worldly friends closed around her, that the believers who had charge of her fought the king of terrors heroically, desperately, even fanatically, that she failed in spite of them and on the eighth day from my departure died.

The court has now before it the materials for judgment. We have argued the question of law, and presented the facts. It only remains for us to advert in conclusion to the spiritual condition of the village in the midst of which the facts have occurred. In Mark 6:1-6 we are informed that Christ on a certain occasion went into his own country, and his countrymen were offended at him. "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hand upon a few sick folk and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief." We too are in our own country, subject to the derogatory thoughts

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of those who look upon us merely as neighbors and men of this world. In this respect we are as badly situated as Christ was in Nazareth. But in another our case is even worse. In Nazareth there was no such doctrine as is taught in all the meeting-houses of Putney, that the age of miracles is past. What wonder if we have not thus far been able to heal more than "a few sick folk" at Putney! Though charity may be denied us by the world, we expect it from him who "could do no mighty works" at Nazareth.

## Chapter 29

### THE ARREST

**E**NRAGED by Noyes's claim of miraculous power, and emboldened by the failure in the case of Mary Knight the enemy prepared to pounce. Their opportunity came through the jealousy of two men.

Clifford Clark, when he heard the rumors that Complex Mariage was in practice, fearful lest his wife be involved, quit the Community, rushed to Brattleboro to consult a lawyer, secured rooms for two of his children at the Rev. Mr. Eastman's, and confided to Mr. Eastman his suspicions. Immediately afterward he repented, signed a retraction, and rejoined.

Daniel J. Hall ever since the cure of his wife and his own confession of faith had been a trusted outside friend. Most of his affiliations were with the Community and he was expected to become a member. As time passed he went deep enough into Noyes's confidence to hear from his own lips that he had personally violated the marriage law. This knowledge threw Mr. Hall into torment for a week. At the end of that time he had another conversation with Noyes in which he appeared satisfied. But he went secretly to the State's Attorney. Soon the High Sheriff was at the door.

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO HER MOTHER<sup>1</sup>

Putney, October 29, 1847. (Friday.)

*Dear Mother:*

If you look this way now-a-days, you may conceive of us as walking unbound, unharmed in the midst of a fiery furnace, and see us not alone but the Son of God with us. Whilst

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Polly Noyes was visiting the Dickermans, Perfectionist friends at Hamden, Connecticut.—G. W. N.

## The Arrest

John was gone, when we were supposed to be suffering the humiliation of defeat in the Mary Knight case, Mr. Eastman stepped forward our declared enemy. He helped forward the affliction, when God was displeased but a little. When Mr. Clark frightened by his own jealous imaginations escaped, Mr. Eastman stood in the crossway, and through this conjunction God let out the secret of our social relations in his own chosen time. That Mr. Eastman should make much of it is not strange; that in confederacy with Israel Keyes, Chandler, Cutler and others of that sort he should raise a frightful storm we must not wonder. But the first burst of indignation is overpast, and we find ourselves never so happy, so fearless, so exulting. Last Tuesday morning, October 26, John was arrested on a charge of adultery. After the legal preliminaries Mr. Miller gave bail and John was released until his trial before the County Court in April next. If you have ever seen him with radiant countenance, walking with elastic buoyancy, his cane raised in a flourish, relating some glorious adventure midst shout and laughter, you have some idea of the scene in his room when he was restored to our congratulations. He was in duress about four hours, and had opportunity to parry wit with the lawyers. He told them that they would have the first picking of this affair, but that it was a controversy of principles, and would have to be settled at last by priests and philosophers.

He was treated with punctilious courtesy from the time when at our front door the Sheriff broke his "unpleasant errand" until he made his exit from the tavern unsoiled by a single word of insult. And so it has been through the whole. We walk the streets, we pursue all our avocations, compliments are passed as usual. Something inspires an awe. We think it is the majesty of truth and innocence, and a lurking fear in the people's minds that we are the Kingdom of God.



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Wednesday John went to Brattleboro, and in the Brattleboro bank he made his first open confession of the principles of the Kingdom of God. He was not ashamed of Jesus Christ. Horatio<sup>1</sup> made inquiries. John gave him no satisfaction as to facts, but boldly avowed his principles.

Horatio said that he was thinking of coming up here; he didn't know but Harriet, Charlotte and George would be glad to quit and make their escape, and he wished to offer them help. John told him we were completely involved; that he heard George say that same morning that he was ready to go to prison for these principles, and that he hadn't a thought of leaving; but if Horatio wished to see for himself, he had better come up; he should have every chance to try for us.

Thursday evening he came, and requested a private interview with us. We talked an hour or two. He is mortified by the family disgrace, and is expecting to have your support fall upon him by the ruin of our property. We told him as to the disgrace, he stood so clear of us no one would hold him at all responsible, especially after the course he was then taking; and that after the first tumult was over and John was heard in his own defense, though we should be called eccentric and fanatical, we should not be called licentious by any one that was honest. We told him that John had been one of the best paymasters at his bank so far, and that the God who had supplied our necessities would in future; and as for you, you were in our hearts to live and die for you, you never would leave us, you were fully with us. There was mutual courtesy, but the contrast as to cheerfulness and spirit was altogether in our favor, and he left quite convinced that there was no secret dissatisfaction which would dispose us to take advantage of his proffered help. We repeated what John had told

<sup>1</sup> Horatio, Noyes's brother, was cashier of the Brattleboro bank.—G. W. N.

## The Arrest

him before, that if he wished to help us, the way was for him to take a rational view; to regard the matter not in the light of statute law but of common law, which says that if no one has been injured, no wrong has been done; and then to persuade such men as Chandler and Israel Keyes to let us alone till we hurt somebody.

I have written more particularly about Horatio, because he will probably have some communication with you. We have no fears for your steadfastness, but we do not want you should come into sympathy for a moment with his mortification or his forebodings, but sympathize with us in our confidence and joy. Now is no time to be ashamed or afraid. Let us honor the Primitive Church by upholding their fashions and by trusting their wisdom and power to sustain the introduction of those fashions into this world.

Mr. Miller was speaking at the dinner table just now of some one, who after questioning him said, if the stories that were told about us were true, it was horrible. John remarked: "Horrible invasion of custom. If all the world were Shakers, marriage would be horrible; or if Shakerism was made compulsory, that would make a greater stir than either."

This invasion of custom commences the administration of the Primitive Church. Complex Marriage is the first principle in the social system they are going to introduce. Community of the affections will be as hateful to the world as community of property, but the principle will prevail. We see every day that this confession of the principles of the Kingdom of God concerning marriage is now the real "offense of the cross." To every one that makes it that confession is the end of the world, the judgment of selfishness.

I cannot begin to write all I should like to say, but I want to have you know, Mother, that we are all firm as a rock, that we have no fears, but praise God continually for his good-

## The Putney Community

ness. You will hear more from us, and must expect something glorious. You must judge of the expediency of showing this to the Dickermans. There will be something published probably before long—not in the next paper. John is intending to publish a book as soon as convenient. When we are examined by those whom we cannot trust, we do not admit facts which would give any legal advantage, but we avow principles.

Yours affectionately,

HARRIET.

HARRIET H. SKINNER IN *The Spiritual Magazine*  
NOVEMBER I, 1847

As it is God's first object to nourish the faith of the church, he is taking far more pains to assure us ourselves that we are in communication with Omnipotence than to certify the fact abroad. We see his power not so much in outward signs as in moral miracles, in spiritual changes, in daily providences. Stripes and imprisonment impend, and not a heart quails. There is among us a moral magnet of inconceivable strength. Iron wills have broken, excessive self-esteem has bowed, acquisitiveness has opened its hand, the affections have withdrawn from every attraction without and gathered within the charmed circle. Our daily interchange is rapidly condensing life and intensifying the power of love.

NOYES IN *The Spiritual Magazine* NOVEMBER I, 1847

We are called to take part in the final battle of the great day of the Almighty. Christ is now going forth on the white horse to judge and make war in righteousness. What cause have we to fear though the hosts that come against us should cover the breadth of the earth? . . .

Of all the ripening agencies both for good and evil none is more effectual than the system of graduated moral ob-

## The Arrest

structions. As unbelief by continually rejecting the evidences of spiritual truth gathers fresh strength and hastens to that fiery knowledge of God which all falsehood must experience in the judgment, so also God graduates the trials of our faith so as to strain it to the uttermost, and thus gives new momentum to our heavenward progress.

MRS. POLLY NOYES TO MRS. HARRIET A. NOYES

Hamden, Connecticut, November 6, 1847.

*Dear daughter Harriet A.: . . .*

When I got home and opened my letter, "all well" to my relief met my eye; but if I had heard you were all dead, the shock could not have been much greater. Dear Harriet, what a letter for me to read! And yet I cannot but speak of the merciful arrangement for me, and I will not doubt that there was some strengthening angel about you when this bitter cup was put into your hand. I will not enlarge. You can better conceive than I can describe the thoughts and feelings that rushed through my mind. I lay down on the bed and soon recollected that something of this kind was hinted to me last summer, and I could not but foresee this result. I have anticipated for a long time, that if we were following Christ in the regeneration we must be brought where the doctrines of Christ, the cause of truth, and all our labors will for the time be crucified, dead and buried, and a great stone rolled at the door.

I said then: "They will not do wrong; they cannot; God will not suffer it." And my mind was at rest. As I had time to reflect, I recovered my composure, believing God is able to raise us up again. As we are set for the defense of the truth and are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, so we shall be perfected and reign with him when he shall have subdued all things to himself. . . .



## The Putney Community

It happened that Mrs. Dickerman and Caroline were from home when I opened the letter, and I succeeded in concealing the matter from them. I think I should perhaps get more confirmed and strengthened myself. . . . What are "the principles" you avow, and what shall I say to show that they are, as Harriet says, "the offense of the cross"?

Mrs. Dickerman and, I should think, her husband are so committed that they must help to bear the burden with me, but how it will affect them I cannot tell. Mrs. Dickerman thinks she is bearing everything now from the church and from the Bradleyites.

I should be very glad to see something in John's own handwriting as to the aspect, but I must look for light and direction in any way God is pleased to grant it. We can be content to sit in sackcloth and ashes so long as the Lord will. . . .

I rejoice to see Harriet's confidence and courage. I will not indulge a feeling that there is a spice of bravado or contempt of law in her, but will believe that she is acting a distinguished part in the battle of the great day. . . .

Love and gratitude,

P. NOYES.

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO HER MOTHER NOVEMBER 14, 1847

John says he is God's agent. His commission was forced upon him ten years ago, and since that time he has certainly known that he was to head the insurrection that would break in pieces the kingdoms of this world and establish the Kingdom of God. The Primitive Church formed the new heavens, we the new earth. They reconciled man and God, we shall reconcile man and woman.



## The Arrest

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO HER MOTHER

Putney, November 14, 1847.

*Dear Mother:*

We received your letter last evening, and the confidence and cheerfulness with which you view the present give us great delight. William C. Gould, who is here on a visit with his wife, was much pleased with your courage in calling for ammunition and equipping yourself to fight single-handed in this war; and John said with what looked like filial pride: "There's a woman!"

And this refreshing letter was only the heaping up of the overflowing cup of God's goodness to us the last few days. Mother, there is no worst to write, but better, better, better. "If a man's ways please God, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him." The excitement in this place has passed away, and a full tide of favor is setting in upon us from every quarter. John thinks that within a month the prosecution will be all closed up—not a man be found to back up the warrant, nor a witness that would testify against him. He says he shall conquer the law by making judge and jury his friends. I cannot tell you particulars, but we have miracle upon miracle in the quelling of the tempest which shook this place. The town is in the chains of a spiritual magnetism, and with full knowledge of our principles and practice are quieting themselves as though it were said to them: "Touch not mine anointed." Mouths which have breathed out threatening and slaughter are giving again the friendly greeting. Houses which have been blockaded now invite us to their doors. For every move which the Devil makes, God has some counter-move that exactly checks him, so that Mr. Miller said last evening, he felt the best when things looked the worst. Through the whole of this affair we have neither said nor done anything to take back.

## The Putney Community

We have overcome evil with good, and carried out the principles of non-resistance in the most sublime manner. I should be glad to relate to you some instances, particularly those in which Mr. Miller has displayed the magnanimity and self-possession of a Christian hero. He has been most exposed to the shots. John gave him the highest praise at the dinner table a few days since. . . .

John is intending to write to you soon his Bible argument in full. I asked him what you should say to the Dickermans. He said you must be left in that matter to the providence of God; if you said anything, tell them to read all his writings on this subject, then read the article "The Kingdom of God Has Come," look at the seal which was put on that confession by the cure of Harriet Hall, and draw conclusions. I think you will have wisdom as we have had. There is something curious about your being in Connecticut, the birth-place of Perfectionism. God has some glorious design in it undoubtedly. Write as often as you can.

HARRIET.

NOYES IN *The Spiritual Magazine* NOVEMBER 23, 1847

The different acts in the drama of establishing the Kingdom of God are these: first, the personal resurrection of Christ; second, the resurrection of the Primitive Church at the second coming in 70 A. D. and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the invisible world; third, a period during which Christ rules the world with a rod of iron and puts down all authority and power; fourth, the final establishment of the Kingdom of God in the outer world. This agrees with Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The succession of universal empires was to be followed by a period of divided rule, corresponding to the situation at the present time. Then says

## The Arrest

Daniel: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. . . . It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

## Chapter 30

### MARY MEAD COMES

**T**WO and a half months before Noyes's arrest his sister Mary, wife of Larkin G. Mead, made the following written confession of salvation from sin, which was published in *The Spiritual Magazine*:

Brattleboro, August 15, 1847.

*Dear Brother:*

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

I believe that Jesus Christ is in me a risen savior, and that I am saved from sin and its consequences; and may his strength be made perfect in weakness.

Your sister,

MARY J. MEAD.

REMINISCENCE BY NOYES DECEMBER 23, 1850

There are two or three particular days in my life that project into peculiar prominence. The day I found Christ and gained victory over sin at New Haven was one. And there was one day in our terrible campaign at Putney that was as soul-stirring as any I ever saw. It was when Mary Mead came down from Montpelier to Putney. There was no time in the whole course of our trials when the storm beat so heavily as it did that morning. I went to my bedroom and lay down to

## Mary Mead Comes

think. My mind was in chaos—no light in any direction. All that I could say was, that God knew how things were going and would see that all went right. But it seemed as if the vindication of the truth was impossible, as if the Devil in the shape of law and brutality had won the entire advantage. While in that state of mind I had an inspiration as distinct as a voice from heaven, that victory had come, and that God would give me a sign of it immediately. In half an hour Mary came.

The circumstances of her visit were these: Mr. Mead was in the Senate, and she was with him at Montpelier. When they heard about my arrest, she decided to come. She held her mind calm, and entreated Mr. Mead not to commit himself until he heard from her. The importance of her visit was greatly increased by the fact that she had the respect and confidence of the surrounding community. As Colonel Keyes said, she was "not a woman to be humbugged," and the people stood watching. They all expected her to fall upon us and sink us. And truly, her coming did not look like a sign of victory. To take a mind like hers fresh from the world and bring it up square to such tremendous doctrines as we professed and practiced seemed hopeless.

I marched into the room as if going to the gallows, determined to die like a man. I sat down and just opened my mouth in simplicity, and she heard me in a calm, respectful spirit. God took charge of the conversation. I had great freedom in setting before her our position. To my astonishment she yielded point after point, and took all quietly. When I had finished, she was satisfied that we were true and good people. Her endorsement at this crisis was like a reënforcement of "twelve legions of angels." It paralyzed the village. Although the enemy gathered again, yet my mind always recurs to that day as the beginning of victory.



## The Putney Community

MARY J. MEAD TO HER HUSBAND NOVEMBER 3, 1847

You will wish me to relieve your mind in respect to affairs here. You said they would tell me everything. I have conversed with all with whom I am particularly acquainted, and I have not heard anything or seen anything that leads me to think them in any way licentious. On the contrary, I must still think they are led by the spirit of God, and are the children of God in the midst of a wicked and adulterous generation. I am still ready to believe that all will yet be right, and to await the event. John has given me many of his views, and will give you the same, if you desire it. Neither you nor I will be called to anything that we shall not see the directing hand of God in, if we look for it and desire it. They all seem in good spirits, and peace and harmony prevail here.

MARY MEAD.

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO HER MOTHER

Putney, November 4, 1847.

*Dear Mother:*

Mary left here this morning. . . . Away from her family cares, with her heart directed toward God in constant prayer, thinking deeply as she journeyed alone, she prepared herself to meet us. She made up her mind that, if she gave us up, she must give up God in the heavens. . . .

In a conversation of two or three hours length John gave her a clear and beautiful exposition of his new theory of society, related to her as far as he could without exposing her to be called on for a witness the facts in Mrs.—'s case, and left her to infer facts in general. Before she went away she knew all that could be told. And how do you think she stood it? She expressed herself in this way: "I had but a grain of faith, but it has removed this great mountain." "I

## Mary Mead Comes

am a perfect miracle to myself." "A thought just now came across me which made the perspiration start, but it lasted only two or three minutes; I am perfectly quiet." In such language she poured forth her heart. In the first conversation she shed tears, her face was crimson, she made some objections; but the conclusion was a peaceful assent to the truth. . . .

God has responded most beautifully to her confession of him in the paper. She says she has a great deal more self-confidence than she had. . . . On the other hand, in her reception of this truth God has confessed us, bringing all her reputation and influence a timely offering to his cause. . . .

It is a time of much spiritual experience and advance in the different members of our body. Mrs. Campbell could tell you a long story. Her reputation has given her dying pangs. The confession of this thing is just the same as death. John told Mary she had passed through all the death she ever would. . . .

Your loving daughter,

HARRIET.

MRS. POLLY NOYES TO CHARLOTTE A. MILLER

Hamden, Connecticut, November 6, 1847.

*Dear Charlotte:*

Last evening *The Spiritual Magazine* and a letter from Mr. Mead arrived. The paper tells pretty plainly of some outburst among you, and I expect that all will be wondering. Mr. Mead of course is dreadfully horrified, shudders, begs and warns, has wept and prayed. He is really to be pitied on some accounts, but in others he is only reaping what he has sown. He has never acted a manly part towards a confession of Christ, and now I don't know how he will come out unless he is an infidel. Poor Mary! I hope her tears are worthy of a bottle for future use.

P. NOYES.

## The Putney Community

LARKIN G. MEAD TO JOHN R. MILLER

Montpelier, November 7, 1847.

*Brother Miller:* . . .

I was glad to hear from so good authority that you Perfectionists are not all "going to the devil." To all I hear of Putney affairs I have only to say, I am not able yet to associate in my mind the names of my dear family friends there with—adultery. When I become convinced that John's theological speculations end in a community of persons, I shall think the sooner he is shut up in some kind of a prison the better for all concerned. . . .

Remember me to friends and believe me,  
Yours as ever,

L. G. MEAD.

MARY MEAD TO NOYES

Brattleboro, November 10, 1847.

*Brother John:*

When I left you at Putney, I said I had had no revelations of the truths you were propagating, but my confidence in you had hitherto been such that I must still trust you. I came home with a full determination to know the truth and to abide by it at any sacrifice. My mind was entirely occupied with it for three days. My prayers and entreaties with many tears were, that I might know the truth, that I might be led in the right way. I read the Bible with great earnestness. I was not moved by any external influences, for I entirely refused to talk with Horatio or Mary<sup>1</sup> upon the subject. (They called to see me very soon after I returned.) Mr. Mead did not mention the subject in his letter, and no one else has spoken to me about it. I always defended you on the ground that you kept close to the Bible. But I have come to the conclusion in this last

<sup>1</sup> Horatio's wife, Mary Chandler.—G. W. N.

## Mary Mead Comes

instance, God being my helper, that I cannot follow you, for you have left the Bible. If there is any meaning to the words of the Bible, it is certainly against you.

I had written much the same as this to Mother, but finally concluded to send for Harriet to come and see me before I sent it. I do not know whether Harriet got my letter. As I have heard nothing from you, I am constrained to write this to you and send Mother's letter to her.

Your sister,

MARY J. MEAD.

NOYES TO MARY J. MEAD

Putney, November 11, 1847.

*Dear Sister Mary:*

Your letter has not disturbed the friendly feelings of my heart toward you. I am pleased with the independence you have manifested both toward the world and toward me. After all your self-distrust, conscientious decision and energy equal to Mother's have come to the birth in your character.

I am also pleased with your determination to stick to the Bible at all hazards. If I have really left it, you have my full consent to leave me. But you remember that I made the Bible the foundation of my discourse when you received my views. You then examined the Bible in the atmosphere of Putney; you have since examined it in the atmosphere of Brattleboro. You then examined it in a spirit which sustained you "miraculously;" you have since examined it in your own weakness. You then examined it with my help; you have since examined it with no help but your own understanding. You are sure of your conclusion from the Bible; I am at least equally sure of mine from the same source. Whether your talent, opportunity of investigation, and spiritual illumination render your conclusion more trustworthy than mine, you may judge.

## The Putney Community

I wish you to remember that I have heretofore helped you in the understanding of the Bible on some difficult points, and it may be that I am called to the privilege of helping you on the point now in discussion. If I am, God will teach you to give heed to my word as well as to search the Scriptures. In the old gospel times persons as well as books received honor from God. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me," said Christ to his disciples. Whether I have given you sufficient proof that I am a disciple and have this honor, you again may judge. Certain it is that you have freely received me hitherto as an authenticated disciple of Christ, and your only reason for rejecting me now is that after three days earnest study you have come to the conclusion that I am in error on a subject which I have studied earnestly for fourteen years. I think this neither wise nor safe.

Mr. Mead says, if my theological speculations have ended in community of persons, the sooner I am in prison the better. This hasty and illiberal judgment coming from a Unitarian, whose creed is toleration and who endorses the censures which his sect bestows on Calvin for burning Servetus and on the Puritans for hanging and harassing the Salem witches and the Quakers, presents a curious picture of human weakness. The Quakers were insubordinate to human governments, the witches practised magnetism, Servetus taught heresy. We also are charged with these offenses, and the first representative of Unitarianism we meet recommends that we be incarcerated forthwith!

I am about to present the Bible argument on the subject of heavenly morality in a form suitable for constant reference. I advise you again to suspend judgment and keep quiet till you see what I have to say.

Yours in remembrance and hope,

JOHN H. NOYES.



## Mary Mead Comes

NOYES TO MARY J. MEAD

Putney, November 13, 1847.

*Sister Mary:*

I am satisfied with your position as defined in the last part of your letter.

As to deception, remember that your first letter to Mr. Mead was quite as deceptive as any of our proceedings. Yet it was honest and inspired. Paul was "a deceiver and yet true." Remember that the truth concerning the third heaven, where the will of God is done as the Lord's prayer asks that it may be done on earth, was not lawful to be uttered in the times when the Bible was written, and therefore is not to be sought on the surface of the Bible but in such radical hints as you will find referred to and discussed in my past writings.

You speak as though I had said little on this subject heretofore. You will find that I have said a great deal. The second coming, holiness and this subject make the threefold cord of my testimony. I will refer you to the seventh and tenth numbers of *The Witness*, Vol. 1; to an article entitled "The Crisis of Perfectionism Past" in *The Perfectionist*, Vol. 3, No. 24; to my "Declaration of Independence," *The Perfectionist*, Vol. 3, page 61; and to the whole of the two numbers of *The Spiritual Moralist*. You find nothing in *The Berean* on this subject. Read in *The Berean* "Marriage Nailed to the Cross," and especially "The Condensation of Life."

In answer to your objection that we are not in the resurrection I affirm that we are just as deep in the resurrection as we are in the freedom of heaven. Neither is yet perfected. The coming of one is necessarily coincident with the coming of the other. The freedom of heaven is the sunshine that melts the snows of death. Read the article "The Kingdom of God Has Come."

## The Putney Community

Be quiet, search the Scriptures, ask for the spirit of revelation and wisdom, and remember me with such respect and love as you know I deserve, and all will yet be well between us.

Your brother,

JOHN H. NOYES.

## Chapter 31

### THE FLIGHT

NOYES TO L. G. MEAD

Brooklyn, N. Y., April 4, 1852.

**D**EAR Mr. Mead:

In the *Semi-Weekly Eagle* I notice with some little protest a repetition of the old charge that I "absconded" from Putney; and as you were a witness of all that I did, I have an inclination to note down for your recollection the facts that will sometime come before the court of public opinion.

1. I did not leave Putney on account of the arrest and bonds, but remained there a month after the law had taken possession of my case.

2. I was induced to go to Brattleboro finally not by fear of the law but by report from you and others that mob violence was impending.

3. I had no thought of leaving the State when I went to Brattleboro, but carried with me a written proposal to surrender myself to the custody of the law (without bail) on condition of peace for the rest of our Society.

4. You and Mr. Bradley disapproved of my proposal, and advised me to withdraw. I yielded to your advice as most likely to give peace.

5. Mr. Cragin and others "absconded" in like manner by my advice, or rather my explicit direction sent from Brattle-

## The Putney Community

boro with the approval of you and Mr. Bradley, and as in my case for the sake of peace.

The main point is, that we left not to escape the law but to prevent an outbreak of lynch law among the barbarians of Putney.

It is worth remembering, that the report from Brattleboro which set me in motion was that Dr. John Campbell had said: "If there is no law that will break them up, the people of Putney will make law for the occasion." This same Dr. Campbell had sometime previously committed an assault on Mr. Miller. Who then were the law abiders, and who the law breakers? I was content to abide the issue and settle with the law as best I could. But Dr. John Campbell could not wait on the law, and he may thank his own turbulence that I escaped its clutches and saved him and his confederates from committing acts of disgraceful violence and perhaps murder.

Yours truly,

JOHN H. NOYES.

At this crisis Noyes might easily have suffered martyrdom at the hands of a mob, as did Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader, three years before. In choosing the unheroic rôle of a runaway he believed that he was following the injunction of Christ, who said to his disciples, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another," and the example of Paul, who was many times in circumstances favorable to martyrdom, but took pains to escape, accounting it the part of a Christian to avoid death wherever honorably possible, and show courage and patriotism by manfully meeting life.

### REMINISCENCES

George Cragin: On the 26th of November 1847 Messrs. Noyes and Miller were requested by our lawyer friends, Larkin G. Mead and William C. Bradley, to come at once to Brattleboro. On their arrival they learned that warrants were in the hands of the Sheriff for the arrest of Mrs. Cragin and myself.

## The Flight

After a long discussion Mr. Mead recommended that all the believers assembled at Putney who were not residents of the place should leave at once. It was decided that Mr. Noyes should not return to Putney but start that evening for Boston.

John R. Miller : After the arrangements were all made, Mr. Noyes danced across the room, and snapping his fingers and laughing heartily said : "We shall beat the Devil at this game." It tried Mr. Mead exceedingly to see him feel so well in such awful circumstances.

George Cragin : Mr. Miller acted as captain in arranging the retreat. The Goulds were to start in the morning for their home in Central New York, Louisa Tuttle for her home in Connecticut, and the Burnhams for their home in Northern Vermont. The next day Knowles and John Leonard were to go. At about midnight we had our supper. At two o'clock in the morning William Hinds, our store boy, then fourteen years old, brought up old Bob and the carriage, and Mrs. Cragin and I with Victor got in. There was some trepidation while leaving the streets of Putney, for we had heard that the officers were intent upon our arrest. When we were within a mile of Brattleboro we saw a man coming toward us. Mrs. Cragin was much frightened. The man did stop our horse, but it was only to inquire the way to Dummerston. We passed through Brattleboro, and thanked God that no officer appeared. We had learned from Mr. Miller that Mr. Noyes left Brattleboro the evening before on foot, intending to take the early stage for Boston. When we arrived at the first hotel where the stage stopped, I went in and inquired whether a stranger had left there for Boston. None had done so. Mr. Noyes had left no word where we should go except into Connecticut. He himself instead of going directly to Boston decided to go to Leverett. The next day about one o'clock we crossed Mill River, and as I always have a care to see that horses are watered and fed I asked



## The Putney Community

William to stop and let the horse drink. Upon a little eminence near by was a small hotel, and whom should we see standing in the door but Mr. Noyes! He had no idea of seeing us, for he supposed we had gone down on the west side of the river, and we had no more expectation of seeing him than of seeing the angel Gabriel.

William A. Hinds: One thing that has always made that meeting with Mr. Noyes seem more miraculous to me was the fact that old Bob had been watered only a mile back on the road, and all but Mr. Cragin thought there was no need of watering him again. If we had gone by without stopping we should not have seen him.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, November 27, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

After my return last evening I made a statement of your proposals, which met the entire approbation of the Community. . . .

I was sorry that Mrs. Hall was not thought of yesterday. That is an important case, and one in which we wish to know your opinion. Shall she remain where she is, or shall we have her husband take her away? Mr. Mead came up this morning according to agreement, and is now in town. His advice is to have her leave immediately. Her health was bad last night, and she may die on our hands. If she leaves, our folks who have seen her think she will surely die. We shall not make any move till we hear from you, unless we see our way very clear. . . .

I told the body last night that the proceedings of yesterday had greatly increased my confidence in you. I must say that I never saw even yourself act with such perfect coolness and deliberation and at the same time so wisely and promptly in matters of such great importance.

## The Flight

I am perfectly convinced that this move instead of separating us will only draw us nearer together in heart. I am confident that we shall get a glorious and speedy victory over all our foes in this town, and that soon we can proclaim the truth on any subject from the housetops and not a man dare oppose.

Otis Miller just came into the store to inquire about the stories in circulation. I gave him to understand what our principles were, and then asked him what he thought. He said he saw no objections, believed we were right, and finally declared that you were the only man who had ever preached the truth in this place. He thinks the people will call you back.

Mr. Mead has talked with R. W. Keyes, D. Crawford and John Kimball, who all promise to do the right thing. Mr. Metcalf and quite a number of others seem to be very busy and I should judge quite excited, but I have no fears. We are all happy and rejoicing in God.

Yours affectionately,

J. R. MILLER.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, November 27, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes: . . .*

There is no mistake but what the move we have made was absolutely necessary. There was a great deal more excitement than I expected. Mr. Mead has talked with Dr. Campbell and the others together. They say they will do all they can for us if they can be satisfied that the practices will be stopped. They say they do not want "any of the seed left," and that "if the paper is not managed very wisely the press will go to hell." I hope for the best.

Yours truly,

J. R. MILLER.

## The Putney Community

GEORGE CRAGIN TO MRS. HARRIET A. NOYES

Leverett, Massachusetts, November 27, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:*

Here we are in Brother Morgan's house, happy and comfortable. Tomorrow we shall probably receive from the Lord some light relative to the next move. Brother Morgan and wife were delighted to see us. They say they have looked for me every day for three weeks, and last night they gave up looking for me any more. How long we shall tarry here is uncertain; probably not long.

In reflecting upon this move it looks more and more like one of God's sagacious military maneuvers, which will blind and deceive the enemy more effectually than any move yet. Well, this is just what we might expect from our God. I feel that every attempt the Devil makes to oppress and injure us is completely over-ruled to improve us and glorify God.

G. CRAGIN.

NOYES TO JOHN R. MILLER

Leverett, Massachusetts, November 27, 1847.

*Dear Brother Miller:*

William will tell you how I came here. I thought I might as well spend the sabbath with Mr. and Mrs. Cragin and Morgan, as there is no need of my hurrying to Boston. We have not settled our plans, and I know nothing against my continuing my journey on Monday by the Springfield road to Boston. But you need not write me at Boston till I inform you that I am there. The change in my journey need not be known beyond our own safe circle, as I shall direct William to speak of it to you first, and you can take such measures about it as you think fit. The only reason I see for reserve is that our enemies might be irritated by finding that the union between



THE CAMPBELL HOUSE





## The Flight

me and the Cragins is renewed so soon. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

I will say a few things by way of advice :

First, I think you should not "forsake the assembling of yourselves together," especially on the sabbath, and I hope George will have grace and ambition to take my place as speaker.

Second, I wish George to go on with the paper in its usual tone. He may stave off such correspondents as Seymour by notifying them that I am absent and they must wait.

Third, I advise you to be very kind to Harriet Hall, and to exhort her to lean on God. But let her friends know that we take no further responsibility for her health. Experience has shown that she needs an atmosphere of faith. As her friends have precluded her from such an atmosphere first by taking her partly out of our hands and then by driving me away and breaking up our assembly of spirits, they ought to bear the blame if she sinks. They may have a case on their hands as bad for them as Mary Knight's was for us. I hope Drs. Campbell and Allen will do the best they can for Harriet after turning us out of the office of physician to her.

Sunday morning.—We are all very happy. The baby stood his journey of forty miles like a soldier, and laughed in my face this morning.

I will note down some considerations in favor of our late movement :

First, it does not break up the Association, for all business temporal and spiritual will go on as usual. It does not even exile all the foreign members, for Woolworth, Stephen Leonard, William and others remain.

Second, it takes away the offensive portion of the Association, and leaves the popular portion to maintain the standard of truth which has been raised by our late war.

## The Putney Community

Third, it secures the confidence and hearty help of our outside friends, such as Mead and Bradley.

Fourth, it will probably allay the tempest that has been upon us.

Fifth, it will relieve the Association of some burdensome spirits (whom I need not specify), and so promote the general health.

Sixth, it sends the men of war east, west, north and south to the places where they are needed.

I could say much more, but William is waiting.

Yours again and again,

J. H. NOYES.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, November 28, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

Yesterday was decidedly the hardest day we have had. The whole wrath of the town seemed to be let loose on finding that we were apparently retreating. But Mr. Mead came just in season to quiet them some. He felt quite used up, I should think, after talking with the folks here, but said he was confident that there was no danger of further difficulty unless we gave occasion by either preaching or practising offensive principles. The advice which I give to our folks is to keep perfectly quiet till the storm subsides a little; not retract anything, but say nothing about our doctrines; if our enemies come to inquire into our principles, tell them that we don't wish to talk upon a subject that will offend the public; at the same time be free to follow the leadings of the spirit of God in talking wisely and cautiously with those who are honest inquirers after truth.

Dr. Campbell sent for Emma and Helen to come and have a talk with him last evening. He treated them pleasantly, and I hope will be disposed to do the right thing. My last article in

## The Flight

the paper caused considerable excitement. It was read to Mr. Mead and commented on yesterday at the meeting in Mr. Kimball's office.

We had a very good meeting at the Chapel today. There were but three present besides our own folks. George took the lead.

I see plainly that we cannot take the first step on Bible ground without treading on somebody's toes. All we can do is to beg pardon respectfully of those we are obliged to hurt, and pledge ourselves to step as lightly as possible.

Mr. Hall called to see his wife today. She told him that she would stand with us, let the consequences be what they may. He went away in great wrath. I don't know what the effect will be, but I will not give place to fear for a moment. We are in the hands of God. He alone is our shield and defense.

Yours affectionately,

J. R. MILLER.

Postscript [by Harriet H. Skinner]: *Dear John*: We must laugh at you a little for getting out of scrapes, but you have apostolic example. I opened the Testament last evening to this verse: "And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea; but Silas and Timotheus abode there still."

H. H. S.

Henry W. Burnham, in flight with his wife Abby for Northern Vermont, wrote to Putney as follows:

Windsor, November 29th.—You will see that we are not far from the great prison house of the State, a place which we have thought of more or less of late. But thank God we are none of us there as yet.

Cambridge, December 6th.—Met at Albert Kinsley's my father's family, C. Higgins and wife, Sophia Dunn and others.

## The Putney Community

Found them full of interest with regard to John's arrest and our position. I preached the "offense of the cross." All were prepared for the truth and expressed their full determination to abide by us in the struggle through which our course lies.

December 7th.—My headquarters for the winter will probably be at Albert Kinsley's. I am much pleased with him; think he is nearer us than any other one in this vicinity.

Abby wishes me to say that she feels strong and ready to meet her relatives. . . .

December 8th.—Everything is rapidly ripening for the whole truth of this dispensation. . . . The very spirit of the public is in a foam because of Perfectionism, and yet no one can tell why, for the news of our peculiar position has not reached here, as I can learn. . . . My consciousness of spiritual realities is so certain, that I can say without the least doubt, I know we are right. I have passed the Rubicon, and am eternally committed to act as a subordinate pioneer in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. . . .

We cannot tell how we love you all, neither will we try.

Three days later Burnham wrote that Albert Kinsley's two daughters, Sarah and Jane, had confessed the faith.

### MRS. POLLY NOYES'S RECOLLECTIONS

In the summer of 1847, when the social theory was steadily making progress toward explosion on the public, I was mercifully permitted to retire from the scene of action and go with John and his wife to Connecticut. I expected to return with them after the Central New York conventions, but they were obliged to return another way, and I remained at the Dicker-mans' in Hamden, Connecticut, as a boarder until early in December. Though they wrote me all the particulars of John's indictment and arrest, Mr. Miller's two thousand dollar bonds,

## The Flight

the frightful threatenings of mob violence, and all the tremendous influences heavenly and diabolical, yet until the flight I was comparatively shielded from the fury of the storm, especially as the faith that was given them seemed to me equal to passing the Red Sea with the Egyptians behind them and inaccessible mountains on either side.

The first news of the flight from Putney was brought to Hamden by Louisa Tuttle, who was a member of the Putney Community and at the dispersion came direct to her father's home, arriving there on November 28, 1847.

MRS. POLLY NOYES TO NOYES

Hamden, Connecticut, November 28, 1847.

*Dear John:*

You may judge of my surprise to see Louisa Tuttle this morning at Mrs. Dickerman's, and you can better conceive the nature of her communications than I can write at present. . . .

I do not know as I can add much to what I have written. You will see that I am doing pretty well. Though I am yet trembling from all she tells me, I am not at all at the mercy of reports and persecutions.

Mrs. Dickerman and the family are not prepared for this. If they choose to hear, I shall tell all in a candid, willing spirit. They do not seem just as they did when I first disclosed the secret, but I shall keep no such. . . .

Mr. Mead's letter was so harassing that I did not like to have it about me, and after a hasty reading just put it in the fire.

P. N.

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO NOYES

Putney, November 29, 1847.

*Dear John:*

I have been somewhat seasick and dizzy in this storm, but I will not by doubting the successful event grieve the Holy



## The Putney Community

Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto redemption. My trouble has been this dashing of our expectations, this submitting to the dictation of the people, and considerable personal sorrow at the separation. Still I am thankful for it all, and await the future with hope. We shall have every motive in the world now for seeking the triumph of our principles. All our love and all our revengeful instincts are engaged. I do not mean any more by the last than I ought. "The public will not be satisfied" is used now by the enemy to push their advantage as far as possible. Wisdom will be given to stop at the right place, or we shall have to go to keeping the sabbath and what not again.

Your good luck attends you. All your plans for the fugitives succeeded through not a little peril. All your plans will succeed.

Mrs. Campbell has helped us wash today, and is in a most heavenly frame of mind. She and George and Woolworth are in the best of fellowship, and hope is springing up in all their hearts about the girls. Mr. Miller and George do first-rate, I should think. Charlotte is strong. And so good-night.

HARRIET.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, November 29, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

There has been a perfect whirlwind of wrath and excitement since you left. But like the poor Indian "we see God in the storm, and hear him in the wind."

Mrs. Hall's case was disposed of before I got your letter. Finding that the public would not be satisfied I saw Mr. Hall yesterday and asked him what he chose to have done. He said he wished to have her leave. I told him that we should not take the responsibility. She is to leave this week. . . .

The people here are determined to do all in their power to

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break up the Corporation. They mean to push us till we divide all our property and live as the world live. I do not know but they would require bond that we should serve the Devil half of the time at least. I think we have retreated all we shall be obliged to, and can now stand on our "reserved rights."

My hope and faith rise as difficulties increase. I know we shall come off conquerors and more than conquerors. Our enemies may rejoice, but their joy will be turned into sorrow. The future never looked more prosperous than now.

Love to all,

J. R. MILLER.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO NOYES

Putney, November 29, 1847.

*Dear John:*

I think all things are going right. I don't believe God will permit the people to drive us back to our original position, as they seem desirous to do. But if he does, they will not accomplish their object, for nothing can separate us from the love of God; they cannot tear the truth out of our hearts.

I was commissioned to talk with Harriet Hall about leaving the Lower House. I found her in a delightful state of mind, full of love and praise to God for his kindness to her and ready to do whatever she knew to be his will. She is happy in Mr. Hall's plan of having her live with Ellen and Philena. He has not yet learned better than to put three together to strengthen each other. . . .

Mr. Samuel Lord and wife are here this evening, so I will bid you adieu for the present. Yours in the determined faith that I am with you and that you love me,

P. S.

HARRIET.

What I had reference to in the beginning of my letter was that Israel Keyes insisted upon Lemuel Bradley and his wife

## The Putney Community

leaving, for fear they would come upon the town for support; and Mr. Baker and Mr. Hall wished James to leave, because otherwise he would lose his two hundred dollars. Covetousness and infidelity are ripening and coming to the light. If we did not keep our minds turned towards the invisible, we should sink; but we will, and God will keep us.

HARRIET.

MRS. POLLY NOYES TO HARRIET H. SKINNER

Hamden, Connecticut, December 1, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:*

If you have seen my letter to Mary, you will have seen that I had got over the worst of disclosing the "great secret" to Mrs. Dickerman and Caroline, though Mr. Dickerman remained ignorant. A short time afterward Mrs. Dickerman and Caroline went to New Haven. When they returned in the evening, the first thing was to point to me an article in the New Haven daily paper, which Mrs. Sacket in great anxiety had pointed to them. They made no answer to her, but brought it to me without hesitation. It was a garbled description of the process going on in Putney taken from a New York paper and that from a Boston correspondent, ridiculous and taunting in the extreme. I of course passed a sleepless night, disturbed and thoughtful but not shaken in the least. The first thing in the morning Mary's letter was handed me. They thought it prudent to reserve it as likely to be too much at once. And indeed the two were terrible shots from the field of battle. I was dreadfully distressed, until I could recollect myself, at the apparent contradiction in your statements. I soon perceived that Mary's own confession fully sustained all you had said, that her retraction was an afterthought, and that she had indeed got the truth she sought according to her faith, the letter of the Bible, and boldly defended it. I told Mrs. Dickerman

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that, instead of being in the least shaken by Mary's conclusion, it was to me one of the greatest occasions of thankfulness that I ever had—the honest, uncompromising manner in which she pronounced John in the wrong for having left the Bible, and gave him up and with him everything that could keep her from “the truth.” Oh, it was grand! How could she ever in any other way have been brought to such a decision? . . .

For myself, it altogether took me down, and I scarcely slept at all for several nights; but just when it seemed as if heart and flesh would fail me, my faith would receive some new accession of strength, and before I received your last letter I had become quite fearless and equipped for any emergency. . . .

I am ready to ask sometimes, Do I dream, or is this all a reality? If John thinks to maintain his position and carry out his principles in the face of a world in arms, it will be the greatest miracle the world ever saw. . . .

Your Mother,

P. NOYES.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO HARRIET A. NOYES

Hamden, Connecticut, December 5, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:*

I address my letter to you, but feel as though your name in this instance embraces each member of the household. We find ourselves frequently saying to each other: “I wonder how they get along at home,” and as often expressing a desire to see you. We expected a letter at Amherst, but did not find one, consequently have heard nothing from you. But we are inclined to believe that you are doing well.

As to us, we have prospered. True, we have had some privations and discomforts to submit to, but God's loving-kindness and tender mercies have more than kept pace. I had a pleasant

## The Putney Community

time at Mr. Morgan's. Wednesday morning we left for Amherst, and traveled by stage and railway to Wallingford, where we arrived about dark. From thence we went in a private carriage to Mr. Dickerman's. Victor did credit to his name and behaved like a gentleman. We met with rather a chilling reception at Mr. Dickerman's. The air grew colder and colder until we were frozen out yesterday and came over here to Mr. Tuttle's, where we received a hearty welcome. I walked over here, a mile and a half, and as I expected it did me good.

John is with us. He is now gone over to Dickerman's to invite his mother to spend the day with us. Tomorrow he and George leave for New York. Mrs. Dickerman is in a state of great tribulation, not so much with regard to our doctrines on sexual morality as on the ground of confidence in John's divine commission. He gave her a pretty sharp discourse just as he left, which will probably either kill or cure.

I don't know yet what my fate is. I shall stay here, where they are very kind to me, until future arrangements are made. Considering the great unpopularity of our doctrines I am thankful for a place to "lay my head" anywhere, and the language of my heart is, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Mrs. Noyes was all the friend I had at Dickerman's. She received Victor and me into her heart.

Your affectionate sister,

MARY.

NOYES TO HARRIET A. NOYES

Confidential or public, as you think best.

At Mr. Tuttle's, December 6, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:*

"Though absent in body, yet am I present in the spirit, joying and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith." One of the good things which our God means to bring



## The Flight

upon us by our late separation is the spiritualization of our Association, the development of its independence of personal communication. We are now in the way to know that our unity is not local and visible, but out of the world's reach and sight, deep in the heavens where Christ went after his resurrection. The world imagines that our Association is dissolved, but we know that our enterprise moves steadily on. And it is a satisfaction to think that even our apparent breaking up has been effected not as in the case of all other Associations by internal mismanagement and corruption, but by external violence. We know that our sacrifice was accepted, and that we have been scattered by the spirit of Cain. We have deserved success. We have done the will of God; now we wait for his promise. Though the vision tarry, it will surely come. Though our enemies rejoice against us,

"Yet not the less is justice throned above,  
And her good time comes rushing on in storms."

I went to Boston Monday, found my trunk had not come, sent back word by White's express to Mead that he might keep it till further orders, returned to Springfield Tuesday, came here Wednesday. Mother will tell you about our sojourn here.

Leaving Mrs. Cragin here, Mr. Cragin and I expect to go to New York and establish ourselves in some way, if the Lord pleases. You know it is an old plan of ours to plant ourselves in that city. Perhaps the driving of us out of Putney will be like the driving of Paul to Rome. The Kingdom of God first assaulted the religious dynasties at New Haven, and was soon driven out. It took refuge in Putney, and has there assaulted the civil powers. Again it is apparently driven out. Perhaps its final resting-place will be at the center of both religious and civil power. Putney is not up with the times in religion

## The Putney Community

and revolutionary progress. New York after hearing Fanny Wright, Fourier, Bush and Davis may listen to me with more moderation than can be expected in our Nazareth. In New York I was crucified. Perhaps I shall be called to deliver my great final testimony there. Such are my thoughts at present, but God will dispose all things. At all events New York will be my headquarters for the present.

As I have paid \$22.50 for Mother's board, I wish Mr. Miller to send me as soon as he can conveniently twenty dollars or more. I wish also to be informed by him whether he will need my presence in Boston on the first of January. Cannot stock be transferred by attorney? I hope Mr. Miller will give me full and constant accounts of affairs at home. We have only seen Harriet's letter to Mother, and know nothing of your state beyond the date of that, which was Tuesday of last week.

We think that Mother will prove a valuable re-inforcement to you. Mr. Mead's attempts to turn her aside made no impression. She is a fast friend to our hated truth. She received the outcasts, little Victor included, in a beautiful spirit. Love and cherish her for our sake.

I think of you as the mother and representative of our Association in my absence. You had a beautiful season of coöperation with me in our journey to the West. Now you have an opportunity of trying your faith and wisdom by yourself. I hope you will keep in free communication with George and Mr. Miller. Don't let public opinion scare the three families apart, nor keep you from any communion which God manifestly directs and approves.

Let us hear from you often. Be of good courage. Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.

Your true lover,

JOHN H. NOYES.

## The Flight

MARY E. CRAGIN TO CHARLOTTE A. MILLER

Hamden, Connecticut, December 8, 1847.

*Dear Charlotte:*

I have formed the purpose of writing a sort of daily journal as one of the ways by which I can divert my thoughts from temptations to lonesomeness. It occurred to me last night while thinking of you, that I would send you the sheet when I have filled it, not doubting that you will all be somewhat interested in knowing what befalls me for good or ill in the days of my captivity.

To begin with a description of my situation: I have a pleasant chamber, prettily furnished, with a little coal stove which makes it very comfortable. Louisa is my room-mate and always ready to render me any service in her power. The whole family seem anxious to do me good, and I believe I am getting to be quite a favorite among them. I remarked to Mrs. Tuttle, that perhaps God will bless her household for harboring me as he did that of Obed-edom for sheltering the ark. She responded warmly to the idea, and assured me that she believed my stay with them would prove a blessing.

Laura Tuttle has been the slave of disease; she is little else than a walking skeleton. John put her under my care, and God has inclined her to love and confide in me, and enabled me to be faithful to her. She has already begun to change her testimony, and says she will no longer talk on the side of unbelief. This morning she came into my room with a cheerful air saying that when she awoke she felt as though she could not get up but would lie still and die. But this exhortation came to her mind with great power: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." This gave us great joy, as you may well suppose, and we take it as an omen for good.

## The Putney Community

Yesterday two women, our nearest neighbors, came and spent the afternoon. We had some intimations that they were intending to gratify their curiosity by having a look at me, and they did. They stared most unscrupulously and, I doubt not, to their heart's content. They questioned me about the children I had left, and my feelings in leaving them, and instituted comparisons between Victor and a baby six weeks old, which they brought with them, much his superior in flesh. Poor Vic did not find much favor in their eyes, and indeed he did not appear at all to advantage. However I passed the ordeal tolerably well, commanded my feelings to be quiet, and behaved as agreeably as I could. They gave me the credit, I afterwards learned, of not being "stiff and stuck-up" but easy to get acquainted with, and left me an invitation to call on them. I am glad they came, for it seems by all I can learn that they are the village gossips, and their impressions of me will give tone to the neighborhood.

John left me four things to do: to write letters home and to the city, take care of Laura, write for the *Magazine*, and above all cultivate communion with God and the Primitive Church. He told me to find out God's purpose concerning me, and talk with him about everything. This to be interspersed with playing chess (by the way I have no board), tending baby and making merry. Tell your mother I remember her suggestion about singing, and find it enlivens me to sing in the solitude of my chamber. If God gives me grace to fulfill all these behests, I shall be not only happy but delighted. And God does watch over me for good. I have constant occasion to say, "How great is thy faithfulness!"

December 9.—A rather unexpected event has taken place. Louisa's brother, who has been living in New Haven, is coming home to remain. I am occupying his room, and how he will feel about my being here I do not know. If it is God's purpose



## The Flight

that I shall stay here, he will give me favor in the eyes of the household.

I like my situation very much. I have plenty of time for reflection and reading, and think that I am in a position to do good as well as get good, and—— My moralizing is broken in upon by the arrival of the gentleman in question, of whom I will tell you more by and by.

December 10.—I have seen and become acquainted with the gentleman. He is very civil to me, and I am equally so to him. He is a beautiful performer on the violin, and this morning played several tunes which I used to hear at Putney. He plays more like George than any one I ever heard, so light and soft and quick. I was delighted, I assure you. Louisa and I play chess, and we mean to teach him. He has made us a board and shown some interest in it.

Laura is beginning to improve. She has begun to talk right, and that, Fanny will say, is half the battle. Yesterday she made a hearty confession of Christ as her savior from disease, and today there is a manifest change for the better.

December 12.—Louisa, Laura and I have been singing some of the songs of Zion, which we were in the habit of singing at Putney, and thought and talked of you when we had done. I trust you are all sustained in faith and hope, and it is with you as with me, that the temptations to cheerfulness and quiet confidence triumph over those to repining. God "doeth all things well," and this separation is for our benefit and for the furtherance of the gospel, as we shall surely see. I don't know how long I shall stay here. There are some inquiries afloat about the reason of my being here. I can gather up my duds and move off at a very short notice.

Last evening Louisa called on Caroline Dickerman. She was very friendly, and begged her to call again, but Mrs. Dickerman did not come into the room. Caroline sent me a large apple



## The Putney Community

as a token of remembrance, but is not allowed to visit me. However perhaps the tide will turn before long.

December 13.—Louisa and I have just returned from a pleasant walk together. We compared our dreams of the night before, and found that we both visited you. I dreamed of seeing Mr. Eastman pumping up muddy water, and she dreamed that Mr. Miller and you were in some trouble about Harriet Hall. Once not long since I dreamed of great commotion there on her account.

Laura says I may say she is getting better. Her appearance confirms it. Louisa sends much love to you all. Tell Catherine I think of her more, I believe, than I did when there. Love to all the household and to Mrs. Campbell. Tell the boys I dream about them often.

Truly yours,

M. E. C.

Noyes's flight from Putney was on Friday, November 26, 1847. The Cragins left before daylight on the 27th, and their unexpected meeting with Noyes at Morgan's took place the same evening. On Monday the 29th Noyes went to Boston, came back the next day to Springfield, Massachusetts, and on December 1st made his way to Hamden, Connecticut, where his mother was still boarding with the Dickermans. The Cragins left Morgan's two days after Noyes, went by stage to Wallingford, Connecticut, and appeared at Hamden on December 2nd. Thus without any special pre-arrangement there was another rendezvous of Noyes and the Cragins. Mrs. Cragin with her baby spent two days at the Dickermans'; but conscious of ebbing welcome found a refuge in the home of Louisa's father a mile and a half distant. On the 6th of December Noyes and Cragin started for New York City. Before their departure they called at the Dickermans' and arranged for Mrs. Polly Noyes's return home. This relieved the Dickermans of all responsibility. Noyes thought too that his mother's triumphant faith would hearten the little band at Putney.

## Chapter 32

### DEALINGS WITH THE PUTNEY CITIZENS

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, December 7, 1847.

**D**EAR Brother Noyes:

The following copy of a preamble and resolutions which were adopted last evening by a meeting of about sixty of the citizens of Putney at the Congregational meeting-house will give you some idea of what the people here are trying to do. They were presented to us this morning by H. H. Barton, Israel Keyes and Jonathan Cutler, who were a Committee appointed for that purpose.

#### PREAMBLE

Whereas, an Association of Perfectionists, so-called, has existed in the town of Putney for several years past, who among other things have declared that the moral law is abolished, and have inculcated sentiments of a licentious tendency, and exerted an influence detrimental to the moral interests of the community; and

Whereas, from recent disclosures it is evident that these licentious principles have been carried out in practice to an alarming extent in said Association, threatening to ruin the character of all connected therewith or brought under its deadly influence; and

Whereas, John H. Noyes, the founder and leader of said

## The Putney Community

Association, has recently been arrested for his licentious practices, and placed under heavy bonds, and has since absconded; and

Whereas, George Cragin, an associate of Noyes, has also recently absconded under cover of the night, evidently from fear of the threatened penalty of the law; and

Whereas, said Association are publishing a periodical denominated *The Spiritual Magazine*, through the medium of which they are disseminating their pernicious principles, and are thus exerting a demoralizing influence not only upon the community in the more immediate vicinity of its publication, but in different parts of the country where it is circulated; and

Whereas, the principles of said Association are evidently disorganizing in their tendency, and calculated, if carried out to their utmost extent, to abolish all law and government both of church and state, and erect upon their ruins an irresponsible hierarchy;

Therefore :

Resolved, That the moral interests of this community demand the immediate dissolution of said Association.

Resolved, That *The Spiritual Magazine*, which is the principal organ of said Association, and which has evidently become a public nuisance, ought immediately to be discontinued; and that no publication whatever ought hereafter to be issued by said Association inculcating those principles which, if carried out in practice, would result in the violation of the laws of the land.

Resolved, That those Perfectionists who still remain in this town ought publicly to renounce those principles which tend to, and abandon those practices which are, a violation of the statute laws of this State.

Resolved, That those persons in this town, who have received

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

serious injuries from said Association, ought to be suitably remunerated by said Association.

The Committee required of us an answer in writing. We told them that we would give them an answer tomorrow morning. The citizens are to have another meeting Thursday evening to hear the report of this Committee and take what further action on the subject they think proper. George and I think now that we shall offer to attend their meeting and answer them publicly, George answering the second resolution and I the other three. I shall go to Brattleboro for Mother Noyes tomorrow, and shall consult Messrs. Bradley and Mead, but shall not follow their advice too far.

Mr. Baker of Newfane wants to buy our home farm. He will call and look at it soon, and will pay a fair price. I am decidedly in favor of selling it if we can get what it is worth. The interest on the money will be much more than the income from the farm, and it will be much less care. As we are now situated we shall not need the house, and if we again want a house for a Community, we shall want a larger one. What do you say?

We called a business meeting of our men at the printing-office for the purpose of arraying our forces to the best advantage. It was decided that Mr. Skinner should leave the store and be general steward at the Upper House. Mr. Baker is to do all the chores at both places. Mr. Clark spends all his time chopping, and Mr. Woolworth is to assist him when he is not obliged to work in the shop. Mr. Leonard and I chop our own wood. We are all to have breakfast at eight o'clock. This will enable all to commence work at the same time and in good season. All take hold of work heartily. We find it necessary, "since the sun of liberty has set," to light the candles of indus-

## The Putney Community

try and economy. I think we shall set an example worthy of imitation, not as under law but cheerfully for the truth's sake.

I have been very short of money, having been called on unexpectedly for several debts. Last week I was obliged to pay about \$300, and had nothing with which to pay except what I got by the hardest. However I am nearly by the pinch and have no fears.

The moment the people here found that we were on the retreat their wrath was excited to the highest pitch. The situation has been ten times as bad as before you left. But God has not led us into the wilderness to perish. I am confident that we shall soon get a glorious victory, but the Lord only knows how.

Yours in love forever,

J. R. MILLER.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO SILAS MORGAN

Putney, December 7, 1847.

*Dear Brother:* . . .

I wish Mrs. Cragin could look in upon us when we are eating our dinner, with the children all sitting up to the table behaving very "seemly," sprinkled about among the grown-ups. We have contracted our table to accommodate fourteen, and eat our bread in gladness. We thought we would try to save wood as much as convenient, because our wood-cutters were taken away, and for that purpose Mr. Lemuel Bradley and Sarah removed to John's room, where Mr. Bradley keeps school three or four hours a day, and three of the children sleep there. I think Mr. Bradley does very well with them. They spend most of their time out of school in manufacturing kites, or sewing. . . . Charlotte has the little ones at the Lower House. . . .

The day after Burnham, Knowles and John Leonard left, the people made a push to get James Baker and Lemuel Bradley



## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

away, but there was a simultaneous feeling in many of us, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." We found out it was old Baker, Hall and Chandler who concerned themselves about James for fear he would lose what property he put in. Mr. Baker thought James and Catherine ought to receive wages for their work, and that he himself should have some of it. How ridiculous, when Harriet Hall has been with us all summer without a word being said about expense! As to Bradley, Israel Keyes got sick of the business, finding it would make expense for the town and trouble for himself. I was ready to tell him that I considered myself at liberty to hire a teacher for my son, as some property had been entrusted to Mr. Mead for the purpose of his education.

Brother Morgan, will you be kind enough to send this to Brother Cragin or John, if they are not with you. . . .

H. A. NOYES.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, December 8, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

I have had a long talk with Mr. Mead about our affairs. He thinks they are crowding us too far. It is now likely that he and Mr. William C. Bradley will come up tomorrow evening, attend the meeting, and do what they can for us.

I think it will soon be known that you are again connected with the Cragins, and it will raise a tremendous breeze. I do not know how we shall be able to stand the shock, for the public are so excited now that it is all we can do to live.

What is my duty? What ought I to do with my feelings about this subject? I sometimes think I ought to tell the people here plainly my sentiments, and at the same time tell them that I would not judge you, that I had too much evidence of

## The Putney Community

your being what you profess to be to reject you, that I believe everything else. What say you?

Mother will stay at Mr. Mead's for the present, say until this question is settled with the public.

I have just talked with Mr. William C. Bradley. He says, if the people here understand that you are with the Cragins, and that you are advising us to defend you, the two thousand dollars will have to be paid. He and Mr. Mead both say, if you continue publishing on this subject before court, they can do nothing for you.

I enclose twenty-five dollars. I was obliged to borrow the money and some more of Mr. Mead.

You will please write to us, but address to Mr. Mead and he will forward it. Mr. Bradley advises this course.

I shall do all in my power for the best good of our Association.

Yours truly,

J. R. MILLER.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO NOYES

Putney, December 9, 1847.

*Dear John:*

Your letter comforted me. It also confirmed me in the belief that your spirit was with us and that God had been working in and through me. For a few days after you left I had to contend with a spirit of separation and desolation, but Christ and I conquered. Then I had to get contented not to hear from you. I concluded we could get along all winter without hearing from you if it was best for all concerned. I thought that God would give you an instinct when to write, and when a double portion of your spirit was needed here; also that perhaps you could help us more effectually if you were out of this foggy atmosphere than if you were here. Next I went through a bap-

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

tism of a spirit of fear. Hearing that the opposition was in great commotion, I fixed my clothes by my bed so that I could put them on easily in case our house should be broken in, and thought I would take care of Johnny and the little trunk which contains your papers. Since then the fear of mobs and all they can do is taken away. Finally I contended with a spirit which sought to push us clear back to a mere belief in the doctrine of holiness, reading our Bibles, attending to our children and being industrious. I fought this spirit for a week. Saturday Harriet Skinner and I together came out of the cloud. We declared that we would not suffer the world to hinder the circulation of love, joy and peace among us. We communicated our determination to George. He agreed, and on Sunday gave us a first-rate discourse at the Chapel. Afterward all came to dinner with us, and we had our long table full once more.

I had the same thought about God's object in separating us which you mention, and George made it the subject of conversation at the Chapel Sunday. I had also thought many times of our journey west, and felt that it was just and proper that I should stay at home. I thank God for his kindness to me, and that he has given me an opportunity of doing something for Mrs. Cragin in taking care of the children. . . .

Mr. Miller's last letter to you contained information of the state of feeling towards Mr. Cragin. Rollin Keyes told Mr. Miller that if Mr. Cragin had not left before daylight he would have been arrested. The people were much enraged that he escaped them, and now they talk of pursuing him. Dr. John Campbell told Emma this morning that the civil authority of any State would deliver him up. It seems to me that this is more bluster than reality, but I don't know.

It seems God does not design to keep your location a secret, for he permitted your mother to let Mr. Mead, Mary and Horatio read your letter to me before Mr. Miller got to Brat-

## The Putney Community

tleboro. She did not know, of course, anything about the opposition to Mr. Cragin here. I think it is for the best. I was glad to have Mr. Mead know the affair was not all broken up. . . .

George took the brunt of the storm yesterday. He had been hearing stories, when Harriet Campbell wrote Emma to come to her immediately. So George was in suspense all day about that. Then the meeting of citizens Thursday evening was before him, and the girls at home were accusing him of having destroyed their happiness. He said he never knew what trouble was before, but at intervals he would say he knew it was a preparation for the society of heaven. If it were not for some such trials, we should be ashamed to associate with St. Paul and St. John. He has been strong and happy the last week, and I think he will be stronger yet when he gets a victory over the spirit of fear which is upon him.

When Mr. Miller has much intercourse with Mr. Mead, he falls into the testimony he gave just before you went away, that he has no evidence of the truth of the doctrine in question. At other times I have thought he was returning to his first love. . . .

These are such eventful times that I hardly know how little to write. I find I can condense the history of the past week better than I can write of our present state. We don't mean to write you things twice over.

Yours in the hope that I shall walk in the spirit of God,  
HARRIET A. NOYES.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO NOYES

Putney, December 9, 1847.

*Dear John:*

George is almost crazy. He was for starting off tonight, taking Helen with him and leaving her somewhere while he went to see you. He said he could not live in this atmosphere.



## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

We tried to keep him quiet and persuade him to wait on God for a day or two. I think it will be brighter tomorrow. People are very bitter against you.

Friday morning.—I kept my letter because it was thought best not to put it in at this office. George feels better this morning. I think he will satisfy himself that it is God's will before he leaves. He gave us a caution this morning about doing any thing that would belie the pledge Mr. Miller and he have given the people, that we will do nothing against the strictest rules of morality in the best society. He thinks that I had better not write to Mr. Cragin. Harriet says, if we were to take Miss Catherine Beecher or Dr. Johnson as specimens of good society, we might write to gentlemen who were not our husbands.

The trouble at the other house arises from Emma's communication with the Doctor. He drives them up closer and closer. She wrote a letter to Harriet Hall yesterday denying that she was practically involved in our doctrines and wishing Mr. Hall to clear up her character. She showed it to the Doctor and he approved. If she seeks to save her life she will lose it. But it is the Doctor's spirit.

The people inflame each other by their meetings, but on the other hand they quarrel. I think they will destroy themselves.

Mr. Clark wants I should be sure to tell you we are in good spirits.

HARRIET.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

December 10, 1847.—Yesterday morning the Committee appointed by the meeting of citizens called upon us again to get our answer. We had a long talk with them. The engagement which they had drawn up for us to sign was the most outrageous document ever written, saying that we had broken the laws of God and man, had become convinced of our errors, and promised to abandon our pernicious practices. We refused to



## The Putney Community

sign it. Then they insisted that we should write one ourselves, and sign it. We told them that we could say by word of mouth all that we had to say, and from that they could make their report. We said that there was nothing proved against us, but, as there were certain things of which the public complained and of which they supposed us to be guilty, we were ready to pledge ourselves that in future there would be nothing in our conduct which was a violation of the moral laws or the laws of the State.

In regard to the paper, George told them that he had never intended to publish anything of a licentious character, and that he thought those who complained were those who did not read the paper. But as the public supposed that the paper had a licentious tendency, he would endeavor to be more guarded in future, and would publish nothing which was a violation of the moral laws or the laws of the land.

Then they wished to take down in writing what we had said, and have us acknowledge that it was correct, so that there could be no mistake. This we refused to do. We told them that they could write what they chose after they left, but we should say nothing about it.

After talking about two hours we asked the Committee if they were satisfied with our offer. Mr. Barton and Mr. Cutler said that they were, and thought the public would be; but Mr. Keyes said he was not, and would not be unless we confessed that we had committed sin. He was very impudent. We however took little notice of what he said, but directed our remarks principally to the other members of the Committee, who on the whole treated us quite fairly.

You may say that we have bound ourselves too much, but we are not bound at all, though they do not think so. We made this offer, but they voted to lay the report on the table and did not accept it. We have all the advantage of having made the

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

offer, for it puts a majority of the town on our side, but we are left perfectly free.

We all have a spirit of victory this morning, and feel that the worst of the wrath is over.

Yours truly,

J. R. MILLER.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, December 11, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

Our trade at the store has got about as low as possible. Yesterday we traded twenty cents, and made four cents profit. William was saying last night that he wanted more time to study. I told him I thought he would get time enough soon. . . .

But I think yesterday was the darkest day. Trade is better this morning. I told our folks last night that I hoped we should not trade any today, and then we should not be afraid of losing custom. . . .

I asked you some questions in my last letter about my own duty in relation to confessing to the public, which you need not take the trouble to answer, as I do not wish to say anything to the public which will make them regard me as any different from the rest. . . .

The smoke of battle has been so thick some of the time, that it was almost impossible to see anything. But it has cleared away some, and we now see plainly that they have got no advantage of us. . . .

Yours in everlasting love,

J. R. MILLER.

## The Putney Community

L. G. MEAD TO JOHN R. MILLER

Brattleboro, December 11, 1847.

*Brother Miller:*

I think the last meeting resulted on the whole favorably. But you will see everything is placed on trial. Nothing but the most circumspect conduct on the part of you all can insure even safety. As I have before said, 'tis not enough to say you will abstain from practices and still maintain the doctrines which justify those practices. People will feel insulted by such a heartless carrying out of pledges. All eyes are upon you. I give an extract of a letter I have received from there:

"They must avoid the appearance of keeping up their obnoxious connections. Mrs. Clark is seen almost every day to be in close communion with them, and from her public reputation I should as soon associate with ——. I still hope you will succeed in leading those of the Perfectionists who remain here to take a course that will in time restore them. . . . Houses of assignation are not popular in Putney, and why this reluctance on the part of those who remain to come off at once, and then the people will be satisfied."

This extract is meant for you only. 'Tis well meant and, I think, good sense.

Things are whispered of Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Bradley, which in my view render it imperative that they should leave. See that the thing is done as humanely as possible, but—let it be done.

Although the meeting did not insist on George's stopping his press, my advice is that he issue no more papers at present. Of this more when we meet.

In your note just received you say: "Charlotte says she shall hold on to you." I am glad to hear this. If she will consent to be governed by my counsel, I will, God helping me,





HON. LARKIN  
G. MEAD



HON. WILLIAM  
C. BRADLEY



DR. JOHN CAMPBELL



## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

bring her safely through. I feel that I can never float her over the troubled waters on the rotten raft which John has built.

Mother decides to stay here a few days longer before going to Putney, when Mary and I shall probably come up with her. She appears quite calm and cheerful today. She has just sent down a letter directed to Mr. Skinner, which I forward. I have run it through. She and Mary, I believe, perfectly agree in relation to the new doctrines, and I think it has taken a load from her mind. How happy I should be to know that all my friends had broken away from a ——— which has cost them so much! I don't believe in drawing up a paper, as she proposes. Commit nothing to paper. There are ways enough of expressing a change of views besides signing a paper.

My love to the family.

Yours as ever,

L. G. MEAD.

### RECOLLECTIONS OF MRS. POLLY NOYES

On my way home I called on the Meads at Brattleboro, and they rather advised me to remain with them, as there was so much excitement still at Putney. Horatio and his family were at Brattleboro, and everything conspired during my stay of several weeks to make me fall in with the worldly view of the whole concern. I came to the full conclusion that John was wrong, and wrote out my feelings in the following letter:

Brattleboro, December 11, 1847.

*Dear Mr. Skinner:*

This comes to you in relation to the late developments in the Corporation. I protest to you that I came home with my life in my hand, prepared to do or suffer with you whatever my duty might require. The paper which was handed me soon after my arrival containing John's pledges to the people somewhat relieved me of any immediate call, and I was permitted

## The Putney Community

to look at the subject without distraction. I did not at first perceive the extent of the pledge, but last evening, I believe, my understanding was opened to see that it is in fact a renunciation and abandonment not only of the practice but the principles which have led to the late disclosures. The idea of abiding by the principles while not resuming the practice appears to me utterly false and inconsistent. If we would carry out the spirit of these pledges, we must abandon the whole scheme as a delusion.

I propose to have a paper drawn up so far embodying the sentiments here expressed as we can cheerfully subscribe our names to, this to be given to the people as the best return we can make to their outraged feelings.

We must acknowledge that Mr. W. C. Bradley, Mr. Mead and Horatio have acted with courage and wisdom in our behalf, and Mary's forbearance and firmness excite my wonder and gratitude.

I can appeal to you and to all the State of Vermont, if I have not brought up a virtuous family; whether there was ever in either sons or daughters any practices or principles that could lead to licentiousness while under parental care. And I do not believe there are any among you that are licentious. If there are, I have no fellowship, and they must answer for themselves.

Of John I say with Mary, I judge him not. God will judge him. I ask no favor in respect to him. I do not condemn him, but his own pledges condemn his principles and practice. I do not find in the Bible nor in *The Berean* a line that would lead to or countenance these practices or principles; and I am determined with Mary by the help of God to abide by the Bible and *The Berean*. I am determined at present to receive no communication from John whatever.

I am myself implicated in this thing with you, and feel my-

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self called upon to protest against every one violating the established morality of society or the solemn vows of the marriage covenant.

P. NOYES.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, December 13, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

Yesterday we felt quite encouraged. The people in town, many of them, began to talk in our favor. This morning Gates Perry, Deputy Sheriff, called with two writs against you of \$3000 each in favor of Hall and Baker. He put an attachment on the real estate, and undertook to attach the store, but gave that up. God only knows when these things will end. . . .

Give yourself no trouble about us. Pray for us, that we may have wisdom to do the right thing. All I ask is to know and do the will of God.

The meeting at the Congregational meeting-house was quite laughable. They accused each other of lying, which is not much better than what they accuse us of doing. When Dr. Campbell was talking against us in all his wrath, some young fellows in one corner kept bawling out at him. The Chairman would silence them, but as soon as he began to talk again they would have the same thing over.

The meeting was adjourned for two weeks. They appointed a Committee of Vigilance consisting of five men, Dr. Campbell, Israel Keyes, Timothy Underwood and two others. They are determined to do all they can to break us. We shall manage the ship till the first of January, I think. By that time I shall want to see you.

Mr. Baker has decided to carry his wife to Samuel Lord's tomorrow to spend the winter.

Report says that Mr. Lamb will prosecute George tomorrow for his offer to Lucinda, and perhaps myself too. George wants

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me to ask how far we ought to bend to the blast. Shall we stop the paper? Shall we stop our meetings?

Yours truly,

J. R. MILLER.

GEORGE W. NOYES TO NOYES

Putney, December 13, 1847.

*Dear Brother:*

We are "faint yet pursuing." Emma is considerably in communication with the Doctor, and is of course spiritually oppressive and sometimes threatens. Helen is more isolated, though opposed and almost discouraged. This makes Woolworth's and my position difficult. I shall at least "continue." I want light in regard to the paper and shall have it. I have some things which I should like to talk about for the sake of having a more perfect understanding, when you can find time.

GEORGE.

*Dear John:* Do strengthen Mr. Miller and George. They almost stagger sometimes under the awful spirit they have to meet.

HARRIET.

NOYES TO L. G. MEAD

New York City, December 14, 1847.

*Brother Mead:*

The enclosed letter to Miller was written without any intention of passing it through your hands, but on second thought I am willing that you should see the style of my communications with the home department and the course of my intentions. Besides you will get intelligence of my present situation, and one letter will answer for two. I send it therefore unsealed, and wish you to seal it and forward it safely as soon as convenient.

I received my trunk on Sunday and with it your letter. I

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need not reply to it any further than to thank you for your labor in our affairs, and assure you that I will coöperate with you in efforts for pacification so far as my position defined in my letter to Miller will allow. I think it must be apparent to you by this time that our enemies as well as we have risen into a region above law. The war has become transcendental on both sides, and it will be decided not by legal but by transcendental processes. We bide our time. . . .

Yours truly,

J. H. NOYES.

NOYES TO JOHN R. MILLER

New York City, December 14, 1847.

*Dear Mr. Miller:*

After receiving your letters communicating the state of things up to your visit to Mr. Mead, I thought it best to defer answering until we heard the result of the second meeting of the citizens, as I could give no advice that would reach you in season. This morning we have received a second budget of dispatches. Cragin and I had made an appointment to meet Abram Smith at the hall of Powers' Greek Slave. Thither Cragin brought your letters from the post-office, and we read them with appropriate emotions of mingled joy and sadness in the presence of the personification of beauty and nobleness meekly submitting to oppression. . . .

And now what shall I say of your affairs? I am well satisfied with your report of the course which you and George have taken, and am particularly delighted that you have recovered your determination to give the enemy no advantage by acknowledging doubt. I recommend to you to pursue steadily the twofold policy of standing firm on our principles and yielding to public opinion in regard to measures. If it seems expedient, I should be perfectly willing that George should stop



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the paper for the present, giving notice to that effect to the subscribers. If we cannot publish in Putney, God will find another place for our press. And furthermore, if the pressure of Satan does not abate soon, I am perfectly willing that you should sell not only the upper establishment but all our possessions in Putney. We have friends in all parts of the country, who will be glad to give us refuge, and help us to plant ourselves where we can grow with less molestation. But I leave you to watch the signs and judge whether we can hope to keep our foothold in Putney without sacrificing our principles. As to abandoning the testimony that the Kingdom of God has commenced or acknowledging that we have done wrong, that is out of the question with me. I shall cheerfully suffer the spoiling of goods or imprisonment or death rather than bend in that way. Indeed I cannot concede either to friends or enemies the right to stop my mouth or muzzle our press permanently or for any great length of time. The threat of losing two thousand or ten thousand dollars will not deter me from speaking what justice to God and man demands. Yet I shall not brave public opinion unnecessarily, and shall have an eye to the bearings of my proceedings on your position.

As to publishing those resolutions in *The Spiritual Magazine* my impression is that you had better not unless you are at liberty to comment upon them freely. I shall canvass them fully in due time. For the present, if your press is under restrictions, I should prefer to stop it altogether, simply giving notice that you will wait till you are free. But I have confidence in George's discretion and leave it with him. . . .

You will wish to hear about our fortunes in this city. We came here with poor recommendations. (Our story had preceded us by way of Edward Palmer's correspondence with his brother.) But we have been treated with more than usual kindness and respect by all old friends and some new ones. Cragin

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

and I thought of hiring a room, but on looking into the papers for advertisements our chance seemed but slight. Before commencing search we called on Catherine Wadsworth and spoke of our plans to her. She suggested that her sister and brother-in-law would be willing to have us occupy their parlor, as they have little use for it; and we might stay or leave when we pleased, and pay what price we pleased. Accordingly Catherine made this arrangement for us, and we leave it with her to say what we shall pay. Harriet will remember our room. It is a genteel parlor on the first floor, with carpet, glass ornaments, eight mahogany chairs, sideboard. A bed has been placed in the room. We have a coal fire. Catherine is delighted to wait on us, and has wilfully constituted herself our factotum. Thus our accommodations are just right for receiving company, which is flowing in upon us considerably. We have communicated our views of the Kingdom of God to all who have called, and have been heard with interest and delight in every instance. . . . We have much reason to account ourselves well treated by the Lord for the present, and we suffer no forebodings of future evil to mar the joy of our hearts. The only drawback I have had has been the thought of your perils and pressures. It seemed hardly right that I should be free and comfortable while you were battling with the storms of Putney. But then I thought that my presence with you would only increase the fury of the storm, and that it would do you no good to see me imprisoned or assassinated, while the buoyancy and comfort which I have here may help to sustain your hearts by invisible communication. Perhaps too we are preparing an asylum here for those who cannot keep their foothold in Nazareth. . . .

Yours heartily,

J. H. N.

## The Putney Community

GEORGE CRAGIN TO MARY E. CRAGIN AT HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

New York, December 14, 1847.

*Dear Mary:* . . .

Abram Smith is in the city, and has spent considerable time with us. John has presented our new theory to Smith, Sherwood and wife, Miss Wadsworth, Miss Pomeroy, Mr. Perry, and Mrs. Black, and not a repulse from one of them. John first met Mrs. Black at Sherwood's last week, and had quite a long conversation with her. He is better pleased with her spirit than ever before. Of course she has many transcendental notions which he is obliged to criticise, but on the whole we think her a hopeful case. I should judge the social theory made a favorable impression. She said most of the ideas were new to her, and she would think upon them. . . .

Your true lover,

GEORGE.

NOYES TO MARY E. CRAGIN

New York, December 14, 1847.

*Dear Mary:*

I have time to say but a word. . . . We only need you and Harriet here to make our situation superb. Everything which George points out in our travels about the city as reminding him of you has also a peculiar charm for me.

We are having a good time with Abram Smith. I think you and he will meet ere long under happier auspices than formerly, and that all offenses will be swallowed up in victory.

Yours heartily,

J. H. NOYES.

L. G. MEAD TO JOHN R. MILLER

Brattleboro, December 17, 1847.

*Brother Miller:*

In conversation with Platt today he told me it was intended to prosecute the male members of your Corporation for gross

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

lewdness or some other of the "offenses against chastity, morality and decency" named in the 99th Chapter of the Revised Statutes of Vermont. It may be well for you to study that Chapter of the laws of the State. He says people are not satisfied with a promise to submit to all the requirements of the moral law and the statute laws of the State while still insisting upon and inculcating principles subversive of both. They look upon it as a mockery and an insult.

I know you and George will some day see these things in their true light. I could only wish you might see them in season to avoid their disastrous consequences.

I know not what John promises himself in New York. As soon as it is discovered that he is carrying out his principles there (and he is watched there), he will be transferred from his pleasant parlor to a less pleasant tenement in the City Prison. I know you people do not like to hear me talk so. This only makes me feel more sensibly the duty imposed upon me of repeating my friendly admonitions. It is hard for me to feel that, whilst I have incensed many Putney people by attempting to defend you all, I at the same time give offense to the other side by the measures I take to protect them.

Mary and I intend coming to your house early next week.

Yours truly,

L. G. MEAD.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, December 21, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

Since I wrote you last we have had some rather hard pinches, but we yet "live and move and have our being," thank God. Our enemies have threatened us in every possible way, but we have stood firm and united, and are now having quiet times. The adjourned meeting of the citizens comes off next Thurs-



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day evening. What will be done then I cannot say, but we do not apprehend any danger.

I think the last two suits against you (Hall's and Baker's) can be settled for a small sum, as it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prove anything against you. I will get their best terms before I see you. If we acted on the same principles they do, we could make them some trouble.

George is getting out a notice to subscribers that the *Magazine* will be discontinued today. I think we shall not be obliged to give up our meetings, though we may stop them for our own convenience.

Our enemies have heated the furnace for us as hot as possible, but when they have looked in they have seen "one like the Son of Man." I have become fully convinced that we can put no confidence in men. God alone is able to deliver us.

Mr. Mead and Horatio want Mr. Skinner and me to put our property, or a portion of it, into the hands of a trustee for our families. I told them that I would think of it and would do what was best. I have concluded not to do anything about it. If the Devil can get my property, he may have it. I have no fears about getting a living.

If the paper is to be discontinued, I should think favorably of your plan of having the Leonards go to New York. I think however they had better remain as they are till I see you.

Mr. Clark does first-rate. If he owned the whole, he could not take more interest in the business than he does.

Emma thinks the Doctor would be very glad to be on good terms with me. The only difficulty is that kick. He doesn't want that to go for nothing. He knows that he ought to apologize in order to have a good understanding. I call him "John the Bootist." Though a great man in the world, he is less than the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are now all in good spirits, joyful and happy. Every-



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thing begins to look bright. Give yourself no trouble on our account. I shall do everything in my power for the good of all concerned.

If you want more money before I come to New York, you will please say so and it shall be sent immediately.

Mr. Mead and Mary have just come up to spend the night.

Yours forever,

J. R. MILLER.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO NOYES AND CRAGIN

Hamden, Connecticut, December 20, 1847.

*Dear Brothers:*

When I tell you that I have but just received your letter, you will see that I have had some trial of my faith. God has sustained me wonderfully, enabling me to say again and again with all my heart, the trial of my faith is worth a great deal more than a letter. When Mr. L. H. Bradley came, I was in the worst dilemma. It stirred up a great commotion in the spiritual atmosphere, so that it looked threatening, I assure you. But I gave the old gentleman [Mr. Tuttle] some money, and believed God, and it passed off. I think it will be good policy for you to write me very soon, and send a special message to Mr. Tuttle with promise of pay. I have heard him tell folks hereabout, that I was going to stay only a fortnight; but if you write and request him to board me longer, stating the reasons why it is not expedient for me to come to the city at present, it will satisfy Charles and Sophronia and make me feel rather more at home. . . .

I could fill my sheet, but the old gentleman is just ready. I have had only five minutes to write this, with Vic on my lap, who by the by is doing well.

I must just tell you that we have some victories over disease in Laura's case, that Mrs. Tuttle, Louisa and I are leagued

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together to resist the Devil, that I am learning faith every day,  
that I love you devotedly, and am

Yours forever,

MARY.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO HARRIET A. NOYES

Hamden, Connecticut, December 20, 1847.

*Dear Harriet:*

This morning I received my first letter from New York, just a fortnight having elapsed since John and George left here. I began to think something was the matter, especially after the Bradleys were here, according to whose account bonds and imprisonment were staring you all in the face, and I knew not what I might hear next. John told me once that perpetual temptation called for perpetual faith. I found the truth of this remark by experience, for I was between two fires. But the Lord sustained me wonderfully, not suffering fear to overcome hope but enabling me to rely on his faithfulness as a covenant-keeping God.

Mr. Bradley was here today. He and Sarah have been staying with Mrs. Bristol since Thursday. Mr. Bradley went to the post-office from here, hoping to receive some intelligence from New York that would guide their future movements. I discouraged Sarah from going to the city alone, and advised them to stick together until they heard from New York, which they finally agreed to do, though not without some reluctance on the part of Sarah, who was ready to go right on alone. But as she is unused to traveling and it is quite doubtful as to her finding her relatives where she thinks they are, I persuaded her out of it. Their way seems to be hedged up, but He who suffers not a sparrow to fall unnoticed will assuredly take charge of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen of Wallingford called to see me last

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

Friday. They have a good reputation which they count dear to them, and a spirit which is satisfied with its own state, and of course are among the "whole who need not a physician." Mrs. Allen, Mr. Allen and Mrs. Dickerman are sure that Perfectionism is at an end, that they are now witnessing its downfall in our separation, that it is an edifice built on the sand. However I should not think it strange if they changed their minds. The women, I think, are under conviction. Mrs. Allen is a great talker, and I had no alternative but to talk faster and louder than she and compel her to hear. She was rather impertinent too in some of her remarks, and so squeamish that she turned Mr. Bradley and her husband out before she could say what she wanted to. The Allens think there is no necessity for a head to the church on earth, while at the same time they have a great deal to say about unity. I gave them this problem to solve: How can a body of believers become one while each is fighting on his own hook?

I have not any stirring events wherewith to fill a sheet. Victor demands the greatest part of my time and attention. I have no cradle, and he sleeps scarcely at all during the day. I read in *The Berean*, *The Spiritual Magazine*, and the Bible, sing some and talk some with Laura, and sometimes play a game of chess with Louisa, seldom leaving my room except to go down to meals. But I am contented and happy, and have no wish to change my situation, not even, tell Harriet H., to go to New York. I do not mean to tease you to write, but you can see that the reception of anything in the shape of a letter must be very welcome. Tell Harriet I derive a great deal of comfort and satisfaction from the perusal of her articles in *The Spiritual Magazine*. Several of them I frequently reread. The article headed "Loss and Gain" I highly prize, also "God's Will Concerning Us," also "The Tongue." If

## The Putney Community

you have not a fresh recollection of these articles, do read. They are excellent.

Mrs. Tuttle is a simple-minded woman who makes no pretension. She has a modest, teachable spirit, and is willing to wait when she cannot see. I am not certain but she will take precedence of some of the women in this region who lay claim to a much higher degree of spirituality. Last evening she came into my room and said she had some news for me. She had been reading "Marriage Nailed to the Cross" and "Condensation of Life," and to use her own words, "It is all there. I wonder I never saw it before." It is evident the spirit of God is enlightening and opening her heart. To him be the praise!

Wednesday morning.—Quite an event has ruffled the "even tenor of my way" this morning; nothing less than a call from George with a summons to go to New York with him. I think it will not be expedient for me to remain here longer, not but what they are very kind to me, but it creates some talk. I shall leave this sheet for Louisa to fill and send to you. Perhaps I shall see you soon in New York. Who knows?

Love to each one of the household of faith and to the dear children from

M. E. CRAGIN.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, December 25, 1847.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

In my last letter I promised to write you again after the adjourned meeting of the citizens. I expected then that I should have something interesting to write, but as near as I can learn there was little done. The report of the Committee was again taken up and discussed, but was rejected by the meeting. The more sober part of the citizens, like D. Crawford and Mr. Barton, did not attend.



## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

The resolutions which were adopted at the first meeting were published the same week in the *Semi-weekly Eagle*, and this week in the *Phoenix, Democrat*, and *Bellows Falls Gazette* with severe remarks.

Thursday night I received an anonymous letter through the post-office, saying that I would be tarred and feathered and ridden on a rail, if I did not leave town immediately. But it was evidently done only to frighten.

I have had a long talk with Mr. Palmer today for the first time. He says he has taken no part against us. He believes that such a state of things is sometime to exist in this world; the only question in his mind is whether the time has come. He was afraid that you had been too hasty, but did not know as you had.

Most of the people here seem to be quite bitter against us, but I hope for better times soon.

Mr. Mead and Mary came here the day before I wrote you before, and spent the night. We had a long talk with them; sat up till one o'clock. They stand about where they did when you left. Mary said, you thought you were raised up to introduce this doctrine into the world, and she thinks she was raised up to put a stop to it.

Lydia, I understand, has given you up entirely, and with you her own revelations. Emma and Helen are opposed to —. They do not go to meeting or call at either of the other houses. Mrs. Campbell calls on us occasionally. We are all well and in pretty good spirits.

We get along about as well with our work as ever. I supposed, when Mr. Baker left, we should be obliged to hire some one, but we are not obliged to yet. I am doing all in my power to get in money and settle up affairs at the store.

We spend our evenings in reading and conversation. God has been with us through all our trials. I am looking forward



## The Putney Community

with much interest to the time when I shall see you and Brother Cragin. I want to sit down and have a long talk with you. I cannot say all I want to on paper.

One word more. Alexander Wilder has written to R. W. Keyes explaining his position and denouncing us. The letter was read today in the store. Col. Longley has written to Mr. Chandler asking questions. I understand he is quite busy against us.

I thought when I began that I should not write more than one page, but there is no stopping till I get to the end of the sheet when writing to you.

Yours truly,

J. R. MILLER.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO MARY E. CRAGIN

Putney, December 29, 1847.

*Dear Sister:*

We were some surprised to find you writing from New York, for we have not heard any intimation of your leaving Mr. Tuttle's. But we judged there might have been some difficulty from your saying that the cakes of ice bore you long enough to jump from one to another. I am glad you are landed once more in New York, in the winter too—you will avoid the cold country snows. . . . You will know how to be abased and how to abound, coming from your retired chamber to the city and the society of John and Mr. Cragin, and the favorable prospects too that open upon you of the reception of the truth. Those who receive John's views of heavenly society now, if they are aware of the stir-up in Vermont, will have a better opportunity than some of us did to count the cost.

Last evening brought us your letter from Hamden. I should think we might learn to put entire confidence in God's leadings, even when it seems to us he is putting us in the worst situation

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

possible. We have all been learning the same lesson in different ways. We too, when in the greatest whirl of the wrath of man, did not hear from John for two weeks. I saw it was God's design to turn us to himself. I said to myself and those around me, God will not place us in this position and leave us in darkness; for the truth's sake he will direct our steps. And he did.

I too have been reading the Bible, *The Spiritual Magazine*, and John's *Religious Experience*. We have now plenty of leisure for reading, since the people have ceased their outward movements. The change is so great from the whirlwind to this stillness, we have much need of faith and patience to resist a dull, lonesome spirit which is trying to creep over us. But I say, let the Devil do his worst, he cannot overcome Christ in us, and we are doing the work of God so long as we believe. . . .

Louisa's postscript in your letter was very refreshing. How much she has gained by losing her reputation in the world! (George Noyes says, we should not say lose our "character," which is the common expression; he has not lost his character; that stands as firm as ever.) She and the Baker girls are far in advance of Emma and Helen in spirituality. Mr. Miller will tell you how they "kick against the pricks." Mrs. Campbell says they almost wear her out. She gets a blow at the pit of her stomach every day, which takes away her appetite. She thinks she must get rest soon. Emma has persuaded Mr. Woolworth to take a journey to visit his friends. She will not wait for snow, but hurries him off. What her object is I cannot tell, unless it is to get away from the pressure of God's spirit. Her absence may be a relief to her mother, as she is the connecting link between the Doctor and the Crawfords. The girls seem to be possessed by an evil spirit which tears them every day. They give their tongues full liberty, talk

## The Putney Community

against John and the "delusion" he is given up to, and urge Mrs. Campbell and Mr. Woolworth to renounce him and his doctrines. Harriet thinks in their case God has gone to the bottom of the heap of worldliness.

H. A. NOYES.

GEORGE CRAGIN TO MRS. SEARS

New York, December 30, 1847.

*Dear Sister:*

Truly our dispersion has so far resulted greatly to the dissemination of our views. We had a very distinguished visitor this week, Professor Upham from the State of Maine. He has written a number of books on the interior life. He is now exerting more influence over the spiritual part of the churches than Professor Finney with all Oberlin at his back. Professor Upham became so much interested in John's experience and writings, that he purchased *The Berean* and *The Spiritual Magazine*, and expressed himself as delighted with our obnoxious views on sexual matters. So you see, that on the whole we are spreading our doctrines much faster by being sent away. And we were never happier in our lives. We are as conscious of holding the truth on the social relations as we are of our existence. And that truth will as certainly triumph as there is a God.

The Kingdom of God has come, the judgment has commenced, and the line is being drawn between the righteous and the wicked. The saints will judge the world. Stand fast, dear sister, in the pure testimony. God is a wall of fire round about us continually. Open your hearts to the free, eternal love of heaven, and you will have peace, confidence, joy and victory.

Your brother in the love of God,

G. CRAGIN.

## Dealings with the Putney Citizens

GEORGE CRAGIN TO MRS. SEARS

New York, December 30, 1847.

*Dear Sister:* . . .

It is exceedingly wonderful to see the hand of God in every move that is made. After we left Putney the people would not be satisfied until they had driven away Mr. L. H. Bradley and wife. They stopped a few days in Connecticut, informing that they were there without a home. Brother Smith was here at the time their letter came, and offered them a home at Kingston. I brought them on with Mary, and have sent them to Kingston where they will be in a situation to support themselves this winter.

## Chapter 33

### TURN OF THE TIDE

CHARLOTTE A. MILLER TO MR. AND MRS. CRAGIN

Putney, January 1, 1848.

**D**EAR Brother and Sister Cragin:

I have not felt in writing mood since our dispersion till this evening, though I have thought and talked and prayed about you and our dear companions in tribulation almost constantly. But what a time we have had! You must get from Mr. Miller a full description of our hair-breadth escapes from the adversary, who truly seemed to "go about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour." But as you said, Mary, the temptations to thanksgiving and hopefulness preponderate over the temptations to despondency. We noticed with joy that God seemed in some way to soften every blow, however threatening it looked while impending over us; that he went with those who escaped, and stayed with those who were left. Since the "three woes"—the arrest, the flight, the dealings with the Committee—my heart has seemed to bound up, and I have not suffered in the center of life as before. The night the resolutions were published I involuntarily felt as Christ told his disciples: "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy." We have been by the pressure of our enemies



## Turn of the Tide

forced to look to God alone for mercy and help; and with all the world hating I have said a thousand times, "If God does not love us and have respect unto our offering, we are truly of all men the most miserable." And, as might be expected, the necessity which drew out our faith has proved a blessing. I am sure that I never felt the love of God shed abroad in my heart and the hope that maketh not ashamed as I have since our troubles commenced. . . .

It must be confessed that the time of our redemption looks distant, and that in many specific instances our hopes have not been realized, as for instance in respect to success in this town. But we can also say that our fears have not been realized, and that in many cases we have been helped and comforted beyond all expectation. The operation of the whole combined has been to bring us down where we can say heartily, "The cup which our Father has given us, shall we not drink it?" "Though he slay us, yet will we trust in him." As John wrote to Mr. Mead, the affair has assumed an entirely transcendental aspect, and none but "He who rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm" can guide us through.

Don't you think Mr. Miller will have enough of the French Revolution to satisfy him? As George says, we are living now under the "law of the suspect." By the way, people began to be quite alarmed about George's health. Horatio said he would not live three months. But George sees a direct connection between our faith and the tree of life, and is renewing his strength.

I have filled this letter with egotistical details, but I know my heart is interested in the great battle now going on, and that affairs in Putney are but a tempest in a teapot. I know too that our Standard-bearer does not faint. Still, when and where Perfectionism will find rest for the sole of her foot I know not. Your operations in New York are signs of God's

## The Putney Community

preparation; the letters from the north are cheering; the Bradleys are cared for; Catherine and James have found as warm a home as could be asked in the bosom of Samuel Lord's family. These and many other things nourish faith and hope, and go to rebut the enemy's accusation that "because the Lord hated us he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us."

Your dear little boys behave well, and are loved by us all. I must close, for "Fredrika Bremer" is impatient.

Love, Love to you all.

CHARLOTTE A. MILLER.

LOUISA TUTTLE TO MRS. MARY E. CRAGIN

Hamden, Connecticut, January 1, 1848.

*Dear Mrs. Cragin:*

Mrs. Dickerman is still fighting Mr. Noyes. She places him on the same ground with Joe Smith, and says that he has become brutish, and that God will take him away and put a pure man in his place. . . . She begins to think that we are all guilty, and Laura joins with her. Mother doubts it and is friendly, but fears the result, as Father is wide awake since the paper is stopped to know what the matter is. Laura says she shall tell him, if he asks her. I give my consent, for it is all about and he will soon hear. . . .

I have today come out to Mother, and told her that I approved of the course Mr. Noyes had taken, and that I was united to him and his followers with a tie that neither time nor distance could sever, and if they went to hell, I should go with them. She made no reply, but it was a great relief to me. . . . If I am never permitted to see you again, I shall ever thank God that I visited you. . . .

Yours with love,

LOUISA.

## Turn of the Tide

MARY E. CRAGIN TO HARRIET H. SKINNER

New York, January 4, 1848.

*Dear Harriet H.:*

My heart flows out to you all. I knew not the strength of my love to you until this separation. New York is dull. I have no taste for its amusements, its vanities. There are no attractions worthy to be named with those of our beloved circle. Yet there is great comfort in the belief that we are sowing the seeds of truth which will bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

I have spent some pleasant hours with a Mrs. Whitfield of Newark, a woman of much experience and possessing a lovely, teachable spirit. Mrs. Sherwood is in a beautiful state. Vic and I are taken right into her heart.

I was told today that I looked younger and handsomer than when I lived here. I don't doubt it. The grace of God is beautifying.

Yours,

MARY.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO HARRIET A. NOYES

New York, January 4, 1848.

*Dear Harriet A.:*

Our hearts were made glad this morning by the arrival of dear Brother Miller with love and letters from home. I have only skimmed them, as this evening we are going to make a family party at Mr. Sherwood's and read them aloud for the benefit of all. Oh, Harriet, what times these are! How many times have I thought of what Christ said to his disciples: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves." I feel a great deal of the time as though I was among literal wolves. Yet I rest in the assurance that more are they that are for us than they that are against us. I have thought much lately of

## The Putney Community

an article written by John entitled "Creation a Work of Faith." God requires nothing of us in this warfare but what he himself has set us an example of ; and we are constantly improving, coming nearer and nearer the Primitive Church. Heaven speed the approaching marriage!

I doubt not you have good times with the little ones, and that the fruits of your labor will be manifest in their deportment. I long to see them, but find it easy to wait patiently.

Yours,

M. E. CRAGIN.

MARY E. CRAGIN TO CHARLOTTE A. MILLER

New York, January 4, 1848.

*Dear Charlotte:*

I thank you for your letter. We were so eager when Mr. Miller handed them out, I wished I could read two at once and listen to him besides. John and George and Mr. Miller are having a feast of conversation at their room in Catherine Wadsworth's today. Before the session closes they will probably have matured some plan for future operations. It looks now as though we should make our new start here, but God will direct.

The papers here keep discharging their cannon at us, little dreaming that we are right among them. We laugh at the shots. . . .

Evening.—Mr. Miller, John and George have just left here to take a peep at the morals of the city. Oh, how glad we should be to keep Mr. Miller a week, but we will not rob the dear ones at home of his society. I begged him to buy "Fredrika Bremer" a baby jumper, and he had intended to get one. You will find it a great relief.

Yours,

M. E. CRAGIN.

## Turn of the Tide

HARRIET A. NOYES TO GEORGE CRAGIN

Putney, January 5, 1848.

*Dear Folks:*

Mr. Eastman continues to "pump up muddy water." He and Israel Keyes are plotting together. They met yesterday at Dr. John's, and spent an hour or two. Harriet says they "hatch and hatch and yet bring forth nothing."

Harriet Hall has not been as well for two days, and Mr. Hall sat up with her all night. He says worldly people visiting her is an injury to her, and he will not have it if he has to put up a notice over the door. He is certainly an enigma.

Mr. Samuel Lord seems some like Pharaoh. When he is under affliction he turns toward us and is very kind, but as soon as things go well he thrusts at us.

Rev. Foster had his donation party Tuesday evening and, if reports are to be believed, they are following the fashion of Perfectionists, for they played "button button," and Deacon Crawford and Mr. Grout were judged to kiss the company all round.

George said tonight that the truth grew brighter and brighter in his heart and he felt there would be some outlet to it soon. He thought we should be free to publish before long, and if no one else published and defended our views, he should. He is much strengthened.

I opened Mary's scrap-book the other morning to a list of passages encouraging us to ask blessings of God. The one that was marked for me was "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room to receive it." I gave myself and all I had and all I could do again to God, and said I would await his time for the reception of the promise. Last night



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when Mr. Miller came home with letters and messages of love from John and you, I came the nearest realizing that promise that I ever did. I was full of love and gratitude; and today the sympathy I feel for some suffering members of our body does not quench the fire in my heart. . . .

I know that John will be directed by God in making arrangements for the future. About dividing our property I shall be satisfied any way. Yet, as far as I have any mind about it, since the people broke their engagement I have thought it best to wait to be pushed by them into going back to the world's way of living. On the principle of letting out line to the whale we have caught I don't know but we might go back.

I feel contented to stay here all winter. Nevertheless you know of course I should be happy to visit you.

Adieu.

H. A. N.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO GEORGE CRAGIN

Putney, January 5, 1848.

*Dear Folks:*

Since the newspapers are out upon us floods of letters pour in with the questions, "What is the matter with Putney?" "Will you write us immediately and give us facts?" Monday morning one came to Harriet from Mrs. Joslyn of Cambridge, Vermont. Harriet returned a good answer, referring her to Mr. Burnham, and saying she would find John the same in this matter that she had in *The Berean*; if she had confidence in him as the author of that, she might still have. Today came one from Mary's [Mrs. Cragin's] father. It is a curious affair, written in his peculiar style, ridiculing John, our doctrines and our Association. He closes by saying: "It is strange what effects are produced by faith when joined with fanaticism, but the strangest of all to my mind is that you should keep such company."

## Turn of the Tide

We have also a letter from William H. Cook questioning the propriety of our retreat, insinuating that it was cowardice and that we had been premature.

Erastus H. Hamilton of Syracuse writes a very refreshing letter. He says that his confidence in us is undiminished, that he is not with those who step one side until the storm is over, that he has identified himself with us understandingly and has been blessed exceedingly in so doing, that he is willing to abide the result. The end will show, he says, whether those who are afraid to lose their lives have taken the wiser course or not.

Harriet received a letter from Mrs. Hancock last night making inquiries and expressing confidence. Her heart is with us, although she knows not our peculiar circumstances. She believes the triumph of the wicked will be short, and exhorts us to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free."

H. A. N.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO MR. AND MRS. LEMUEL H. BRADLEY

Putney, January 14, 1848.

*Dear Brother and Sister: . . .*

We have not been assaulted by the powers that be since you left, but we have had enough fighting with principalities and powers in the spiritual world to keep our armor bright. . . . Shall the happy household which used to collect last summer evenings ever be gathered again? The will of the Lord be done. We are all together in the purpose of our hearts, the establishment of God's kingdom in this world.

George Noyes was much strengthened by the trials he endured before you left. He has taken a journey to Boston with his wife. He thinks the girls are gaining some. Their talk has not much edge. Emma has been with Mr. Woolworth to visit

## The Putney Community

his relatives. Had a pleasant time, they say; no talk on particular subjects. . . .

H. A. NOYES.

HARRIET A. NOYES TO NOYES AND CRAGIN

Putney, January 17, 1848.

*Dear Friends:* . . .

James and Catherine Baker are here making us a visit. . . . James has had a plain talk with his father today. When his father spoke ill of John, James said he did not wish to hear such talk. His father said he had hoped, when James got away from Mr. Noyes's influence, he would give up the principles which were offensive. James replied that he might give up that hope, for he never should. He then informed his father that people had not gained anything by sending John away, for he was doing a greater business than ever. . . .

I think if there is anything left undone, the people will be excited to do it, for just as James has had this talk with his father there is no small stir about trade. Mr. Miller thinks if he had goods he could sell a hundred dollars' worth in a day. The other merchants are watching. Mr. Chandler's clerk has made several errands into our store today, probably to see who was in. Mr. Miller is more distressed by this turn of affairs than he was by his loss of trade. He thinks it will enrage our enemies to pounce upon us again, and is at a loss whether to get more goods or not. He has been thoughtful and anxious about our property of late. It seems to me God is showing him how easily he can prosper our worldly affairs if he chooses. . . . Mr. Miller said, after he got out of this murky atmosphere and was refreshed by your presence he felt well; but when he got home the horrors came upon him worse than ever. I have thought he might be going through some such strait as George did. If so, I hope it will turn out as well.

## Turn of the Tide

Harriet and Mr. Skinner have just returned from Mr. Miller's. They have been talking about trusting in God for our living from day to day. Charlotte says she herself is much like her father—wants to see what we are going to depend upon and have something on hand before she needs. I think the prospect of losing all our property was necessary for her and Mr. Miller's education, if for nothing else.

Mr. Miller feels better. He says Chandler and Grout have helped to give him custom by the course they have taken through the summer. They agreed together to raise their prices, and now Mr. Miller gets his goods for cash lower than they do, so there is a great difference in their selling prices. Mr. Chandler tells folks that goods have fallen since he was in market, and Mr. Grout tells them it is not respectable to trade at our store. . . .

Dr. Campbell has been confined to his house some days with the jaundice. I believe that disease is the overflowing of the gall—quite natural in his case. . . .

With love from us all,

H. A. N.

HARRIET H. SKINNER TO NOYES

Putney, January 17, 1848.

*Dear John:*

Mother and Mary are here. They came in the stage. Mother looks rather long-faced. We have not begun the mooted question yet; we use our language to conceal our thoughts. I suppose Mother will take independent ground, but I imagine it will be as easy to convert her back from the Brattleboro ideas as it was to convert her to them. I feel quite sufficient for it, but perhaps I have not calculated the power that is in possession of her mind.

Your letters by Mr. Miller and one since by mail were extremely edifying, building us up in our most holy faith. I have



## The Putney Community

had temptations to think that when Harriet goes to New York those of us who are left here will settle down into a humdrum life. But I believe from the past that God will still keep us in school, that his word so plentifully sown in our hearts liveth and abideth forever, and that we shall be able to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do. We cannot really retrograde.

Erastus Hamilton in a beautiful letter quotes the passage: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," which I think may reconcile us to the apparent dissolution of the Putney Association. It was certainly a perfect seed. The people here have done what they could to put it under ground and harrow it in.

I have just bowed to George and Helen returning from Boston. We never loved George as we do now.

Yours in love,

HARRIET.

Reviewing in her *Recollections* her sojourn in Brattleboro Mrs. Polly Noyes wrote: "It was a dark time for me. After about five weeks Mrs. Mead went with me to Putney. The first night I said nothing, and was in great distress. But in the morning no sooner had Harriet opened her mouth and begun to preach to me her faith than the bubble burst and I was restored to my usual confidence. When I wrote to John of the change in my mind, and put in twenty-five dollars for his use, his wife leaped for joy."

MARY E. CRAGIN TO JOHN R. MILLER

New York City, January 18, 1848.

*Dear Brother Miller:*

Mr. Noyes says he does not yet see the necessity of a division, nor how a division will satisfy the people if we still continue to be united in heart and principles; yet if it shall appear that a division is necessary, he has no objection on his



## Turn of the Tide

own account. If that step be taken, he will not be satisfied to have it done on selfish, worldly principles; it must be done on the principle that the strong shall help the weak. He offers in case a division takes place to deed his half of the Campbell farm to W. H. Woolworth, and the printing-office and printing materials to S. R. Leonard.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, January 19, 1848.

*Dear Brother Noyes:*

I am well aware that I wrote my last letter under the influence of the foggy atmosphere of Putney. After I had written it I hesitated about sending it, and kept it two days, but as I saw no change for the better I concluded to send it. We had many things to make us feel unpleasant at that time. It seemed almost impossible for us to live a single day. When I write you I throw my whole heart onto the paper, so that you have me just as I am at the moment of writing.

If you supposed that in proposing a division I wished to look out for myself, you entirely misunderstood me, for God knows as long as I have a dollar it is at the disposal of the Community. All the property I have belongs to God to be used as he directs. And as the property of God it belongs to all of his children as much as it does to me. God forbid that I should ever view it in a different light. I know that in heart I am one with the household of faith, and of course can have no separate interest in property. I hope to prove that my love is not in word but in deed. . . .

The whole town is in commotion on our account. The Pharisees and hypocrites see us prospering even beyond our own expectations after all they have done to make an end of us. The people, all the better part, have more confidence in us now than ever. Several have inquired about you with apparent

## The Putney Community

interest since my return. I tell them frankly where you are and answer any proper questions; and they do not seem disposed to ask any others. How we are coming out I cannot say, but it looks now as though this town would surrender before spring. But I expect much hard fighting first.

I thought it might be well for all concerned to change the sign over the store even if we did not divide the property; but if you think best to change the sign back and go on as we did before, I shall do it. Be it known once for all that I have no private feelings to gratify. I shall give you freely and frankly my view of things, but not with a determination to have my policy pursued. Rather than not follow the truth I would see our farms as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah and all our property in the bottom of the sea.

Yours as ever and forever,

J. R. MILLER.

JOHN R. MILLER TO NOYES

Putney, January 20, 1848.

*Dear Brother Noyes: . . .*

There are many things now which look encouraging. To my great surprise, when I got my little stock of new goods open, customers began to flock in and buy. Every hour would present some new face. Those even who have been bitterly opposed and have said much to injure us began to show themselves at the store, both ladies and gentlemen. It has been amusing. Ladies would come into the store with faces as long as a yardstick, and leave with their prettiest smile. It is very evident that those who used to trade with us are anxious to get back. Many are trying to stop it, but if they come within reach they are magnetized and drawn in themselves. People begin to say: "Well, I shall trade with you, let folks say what they will." One lady will come in, and that will give another

## Turn of the Tide

courage to come. Last Saturday, the store being open in the evening so that the ladies could come in under cover of night, we had our store full all the evening. . . . I have secured the trade of both paper mills, and their paper will pay for all the West Indies' goods I want. We could trade more by keeping the store open evenings, but I am determined to close the store at dark and also stick to the cash system.

On the other hand there are some things against us. Mr. Walker of Saxton's River spent two or three days here looking up testimony. Our most bitter enemies grow more and more mad as they see symptoms of our prosperity. And—that is all I can think of.

As you do not seem to see the necessity of dividing the property, as I do, I think I will say nothing more about it at present. I am satisfied that before it is necessary to make any such move we shall see the subject alike and be able to act in perfect harmony.

Mr. Lamb's suit, which I told you was against George, is against J. H. N., G. W. N. and J. R. M. "for enticing Lucinda away to the serious injury and expense of her father."

Mother is staying with us for the present. Harriet and Charlotte say that she is improving very fast.

Yours truly,

J. R. MILLER.

NOYES TO THE PUTNEY COMMUNITY

New York, January 21, 1848.

*Dear Friends:*

The best thing I can do for you is to give you a view of our position as seen from my standpoint, which perhaps is more favorable to clear vision than yours. My desire is to see things as God sees them, hating the fire-eye of fanaticism on the one hand and the fish-eye of unbelief on the other.

## The Putney Community

Our warfare is an assertion of human rights : first, the right of man to be governed by God and to live in the social state of heaven ; second, the right of woman to dispose of her sexual nature by attraction instead of by law and routine and to bear children only when she chooses ; third, the right of all to diminish the labors and increase the advantages of life by association. These are certainly the dearest of all human rights, and we cannot spend or be spent better than in their defense.

The governments of this world positively forbid the social state of heaven. These governments will never of their own accord give place to the Kingdom of God. Hence the Kingdom of God, when it comes, must come without leave and contrary to law.

We have drawn the issue deliberately, and as humanely as possible. No one has been injured ; no one directly concerned makes any complaint. All within our own circle are conscious of benefit. We have moved out of the fashion of this world soberly, cautiously, conscientiously, and after a long, severe course of preparatory education.

Our position is defended on the spiritual side by open manifestations of the power and wisdom of God attending us ; on the intellectual side by a complete and splendid theory of sexual rights and relations ; on the moral side by great improvement in our characters ; and on the physical side by many cases of healing and a general advance of health among us promising ultimate victory over death.

The head and front and whole of our offense is communism of love. No other charge is brought against us by our enemies. If this is the unpardonable sin in the world, we are sure it is the beauty and glory of heaven.

Yours,

J. H. NOYES.

## Chapter 34

### FUSION OF PERFECTIONISTS IN CENTRAL NEW YORK

WILLIAM C. GOULD TO JONATHAN BURT

Putney, Vermont, November 15, 1847.

**D***EAR Brother:*

We arrived here a week ago last Friday, and found a very hearty welcome as well as an interesting home among the saints.

When I left home there was some doubt whether I should be able to reach Putney, and if I should I expected my tarry would be short. But since my arrival I find such an interesting field and such an important and useful school in Putney that my former plans and calculations are all knocked in the head and I am thrown upon the indications of Providence rather than my own forecast.

It would be gratifying to me to narrate to you what I have seen, heard and felt since I landed in this place, but for several reasons I am unable to do it at present. Suffice it to say, that I am perfectly satisfied that the Kingdom of Heaven is come in reality, and that so far as I am concerned an everlasting end has come upon all further cavil and dispute about the matter. Among a great many other things the fact that I have found the one in whom the spirit of the Lord resides and through whom God intends to reign over this kingdom is a most splendid and joyful discovery to me. In a word I



## The Putney Community

would say to you, that Brother Noyes instead of claiming too much confidence and dependence upon him as a leader has claimed too little, and instead of having placed too much confidence in him heretofore I deem it perfectly safe to confide in him still more implicitly. And should any inquire of you, Is J. H. the one that should come, or do we look for another, you may refer them to the things which I have seen in Putney, viz., that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he, in my opinion, whosoever shall not be offended in the leadership of Brother John H. . . .

As I know you must feel interested in my remaining here as long as God shall direct, that I may learn any useful lessons which it may be necessary to know in order to conduct our infant Association with success, I feel confident that you will not consider it a burden to take charge of my temporal matters at Oneida Depot during my absence. . . .

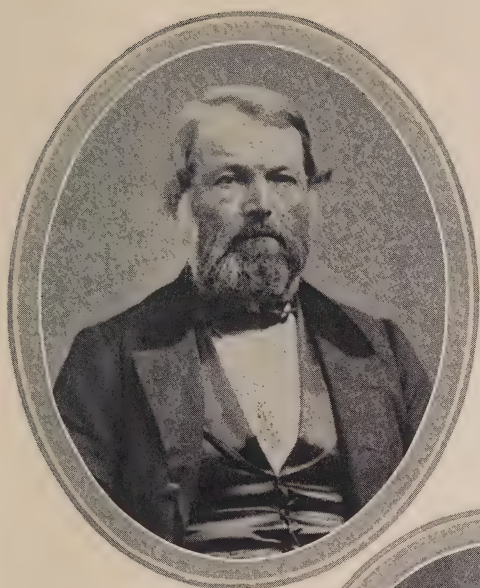
In respect to Central New York do not think my interest and attachments are lessened. I feel for you in your isolated state, and am ready to throw myself into your ranks and share with you in your conflicts with the enemy as soon as you are ready for battle and I am qualified to aid you. . . .

Yours in the spirit of complete association,

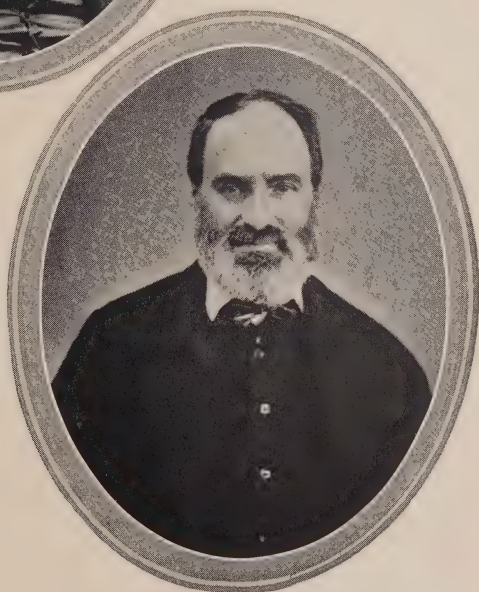
W. C. GOULD.

### NARRATIVE OF JONATHAN BURT

About the first of November 1847 Joseph C. Ackley made me a visit to see if he and his Beaver Meadow associates could not join me at my place. Such an arrangement was easily concluded. I was to dismiss my sawyer and other hired help, and Ackley and company were to take their place; and we were to carry on the business in common. On account of Mrs. Burt



JONATHAN BURT



DANIEL P. NASH



## Fusion of Perfectionists in Central New York

not being in full sympathy it was thought expedient to let the business continue in my name for the time being, hoping and expecting her speedy conversion. She consented to have the Ackleys come into our house until such time as we could prepare quarters elsewhere. They arrived on the 26th of November, 1847.<sup>1</sup> On the 27th we commenced digging and preparing for the foundation of a house in which to accommodate the three families. The house, which was little more than a shanty, was ready for occupation by the middle of December, and Mr. Ackley with the other two families moved in.

The brethren from Hamilton brought no money. Mr. Ackley brought a horse, and I bought one to match, which made us two teams. I had good contracts with the Railroad for all the lumber the mill could make. Mr. Timothy Jenkins had lent me his name to the Vernon Bank for \$200, which I had been obliged to borrow. But while this money was being spent we had no snow, and most of the time the mud was so deep our teams had to stand idle in the barn. Of course there were no logs to saw at the mill, and no money coming from the sale of lumber. Time for the payment of the bank note was drawing near, and I had no means of paying. I felt however a strong trust that God would provide. Meanwhile our little band were internally harmonious, and in the main buoyant and happy. Hial Waters from Hamilton joined us sometime in December. He was under age, but a warm-hearted believer and very energetic. The Association know what good material he had in him for a pioneer. Mr. Abbott had made us a visit, and had decided to join us in the spring with his family.

We had first learned from Dr. Gould the situation at Putney. He expressed great confidence in Mr. Noyes as a leader, and

<sup>1</sup> Noyes comments in his *First Annual Report of the Oneida Community*, that not until later was it perceived that the very day of the dissolution at Putney was the day of the first union at Oneida.—G. W. N.

## The Putney Community

was full of enthusiasm for starting a community, pledging himself to sell his property and join us as soon as possible. He made some complaint about what he called Mr. Noyes's aristocratic tendency; thought it was a family trait, but believed things would come out right in the end. I inferred that he had had some difficulty touching his own personal liberty, but did not learn the exact nature of it. I refused to entertain his accusation of Mr. Noyes, being satisfied that Mr. Noyes had met in him something that needed resistance.

WILLIAM S. HATCH TO GEORGE W. NOYES

East Hamilton, New York, December 18, 1847.

*My dear Brother George W. Noyes:*

In our Beaver Meadow move for community we are greeted by acclamation by our townsmen. "That is the true state of society," say they; and to their cheer our hearts respond a loud amen.

Our affairs are working well, "to a charm." Our eyes are opening to heaven's order. Our community house is built, and Brother Ackley and family are on the ground. Six inches of snow will start all of our Beaver Meadow band, save Holmes and Waters who are to follow in the spring, if God wills.

The following is a list of our Circus Company:

Joseph C. Ackley	Daniel P. Nash
Julia Ackley	Sophia Nash
Albert, Edgar, and	Edwin S., Olive Ann,
Alice	Florilla S.
Wm. S. Hatch	Elmer Waters, wife & Reuben Holmes
Evoline Hatch	2 sons & 1 daughter wife, 1 son &
Mary Emily	2 daughters.

23 souls.



## Fusion of Perfectionists in Central New York

The Providence of God placed us contiguous three years since, and our coming together has been emphatically "without sound of hammer."

We should be happy, if it is not too much trouble for to give us each and all of the names of our family at Putney. When Ackley wrote last, Burt's house contained 16 souls.

We hear Gould has returned.

Cook hails from Syracuse as yet, but it seems as though the Hamiltons would like to join us en masse.

I have just petitioned the Cabinet of Heaven for \$300, and I shall get it, for my faith apprehends it.

Our bark rides well. All on board are in high glee. Mrs. Burt is exceeding kind, and has invited myself and wife to take up lodgings in "Burt's Hotel."

New York is fitting up her car. God is the locomotive, and we are the whiffletrees. The steam is smoking. Hail the mighty ship riding in the eastern waters!

More anon.

Yours for the Truth,

WM. SPENCER HATCH.

WILLIAM C. GOULD TO NOYES

Oneida, New York, December 25, 1847.

*Brother Noyes:*

In reporting to you from this part of the field I am happy to say that I found on my return from Putney that association was progressing much faster than I expected. Burt was building a house for the East Hamilton company, and Ackley and family had arrived. Today Hatch and Nash will move in. Waters is also there.

Foot and wife came here two weeks since to buy Stone's place and form a domain at the Depot by adding that to my place and gradually extending it. He appeared to have had a

## The Putney Community

revelation to that end. Burt and myself opposed them very mildly, and the next Sunday went over to Lairdsville with Lovett and wife and we thought succeeded in satisfying them it would be better to buy a farm adjoining Burt. Foot can sell his farm to Sanford, and his wife is willing. She however is still no more favorable to association and is very jealous of Putney fashions.

There is now a pretty strong prospect that in the spring we shall have about three hundred acres adjoining Burt of arable and pasture land and an association house commenced. Abbott and Cook stayed with us Tuesday night. Abbott has sold his place for \$850, and has consented to join Foot in the purchase of a farm adjoining Burt's.

Cook talks somewhat differently from what I expected. He is very much engaged in bringing others into the dispensation of righteousness instead of association. Has fourteen converts under his care. I should judge they were Millerites. He talks about a roving commission and of coming into association after all the rest are in. I was somewhat surprised to hear him say, that he stood ready to put his hand on Putney if he found they had crossed the present custom of the world in respect to the sexual relation. I wanted to tell him that he needed resurrection faith and a baptism of the fire of free love, but I durst not.

My wife and self leave today for Syracuse. Shall remain there till Monday. Expect to see quite a gathering there with Burt and Hatch.

I think I can see plainly enough that if Cook holds on to his present Syracuse project God will come in a way he is not aware of and knock it all into a cocked hat. I shall endeavor to convince him of this if the prospect justifies the attempt, but my hopes are small.

I am run pretty close on all hands about Putney customs,





JOSEPH C.  
ACKLEY



JULIA C. ACKLEY

## Fusion of Perfectionists in Central New York

but thus far succeed in referring people to your former writings, to Brother Foot who has also made a visit to Putney, and to my letter to Cook, a copy of which I carry for this particular use. But Mrs. Foot on the back of all promptly declared her settled opinion that promiscuous intercourse was the order of the day at Putney. Burt is most clear on this subject by all odds of any I come across.

I do not understand your object in proposing to sell out in Putney and locate in New York City. The suggestion of selling I think I can see is good policy. In respect to the Putney Invincibles coming into sympathy with the persecuted Jews, I talked with Skinner and wife about their being ordained as missionaries before I left Putney, and invited them into this part of the vineyard if they should be licensed.

We suppose Cragin and wife are with you. When you get through in the City, if all three of you wish a home, my wife and I will endeavor to make Oneida Depot as comfortable for you as we can during your expatriation, and will share with you the opprobrium and persecution with which the enemies of righteousness are now so hotly pursuing you.

Yours in haste,

W. C. GOULD.

JOSEPH C. ACKLEY TO HIAL WATERS

Burt's, January 4, 1848.

*Dear Brother Hial:*

By the request of Brother Burt I forward you a line by way of a call for you to come immediately to this place, if you can. Brother Burt has bought another horse, and wants you that he may start another team. Please inform him immediately either in person or otherwise in answer to the call.

Things in this region bear a favorable aspect toward our contemplated movements, more so than we could have expected



## The Putney Community

a short time since. It looks just like God, for he will do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. We are expecting Brother Hamilton here this week to make arrangements for moving on. It is proposed that the brethren buy out Crain, Francis and Corkins, if the means can be furnished, and I think they can. I think we have hit upon the right place by grace, and that now is the time of salvation to the church. We have got to stand as minute-men ready to enter in at every opening of a door.

Tell your father he has a place among us somewhere; it will be found in due time. Say to your mother, Be not disconsolate nor in dismay, but come into conjunction with apostolic faith. God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and connection with that power now will as quickly restore the withered hand as it did then. Sister, wilt thou believe? If thou wilt, I say unto thee, Arise and show forth the glory of God. God is a miracle not to himself but only to the mind that cannot discern his supernatural power. You need not expect a whirlwind or a hurricane, but simply have faith in God. My prayer is, God bless you with the whole truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Julia sends love. Yours in the faith of Christian love and fellowship,

JOSEPH C. ACKLEY.

WILLIAM C. GOULD TO NOYES

*Report No. 1 from District of New York and New Jersey*

Oneida, New York, January 18, 1848.

*Brother Noyes: . . .*

Perceiving that Cook would never be fit for the service while he continued in so much bondage to exclusiveness . . . I accepted his invitation to visit Syracuse and took my wife, with intention of laying siege to him in his own fortress. I found, as I suspected, that he was making a tremendous effort

## Fusion of Perfectionists in Central New York

to organize a force in Syracuse that should be under his exclusive control and independent of Putney as well as of Oneida. I found him surrounded with the fourteen inquirers or, as he had expressed it, new converts, and the Perfectionists generally of that region. I sat down in silence Sunday and Monday to reconnoitre his position, and found him as legal as Latourette, preaching two days and nights with as much vehemence.

I prayed God on Monday to let loose the Devil's artillery upon him and spike his guns. On Monday evening I saw my prayer was being answered. He became enveloped in thick darkness, and seemed like a lunatic beating the air. At ten o'clock his physical strength became exhausted, and in the night Satan made a savage attack upon his body in the form of disease. On Tuesday I found an opening through his fortress, and opened a fire on him. That night the Devil was let loose upon Lucinda.

On Wednesday I found them willing to hear, and stated in the finale that I had become tired of his evasive and unmeaning answers about practical association, that myself and the church here and at Putney had been waiting on his motion since last September, and that we would wait no longer; that instead of being charmed by the beauties of association he and Lucinda were occupied in contending against lasciviousness and Gatesism; that instead of being willing to forsake all I found him in love with city life, fashions and luxuries; that they were hugging their worldly relations and his \$500 salary; that it was all wrong and would call down the curse of God Almighty; that although I was the most independent Perfectionist in the State I had thrown all overboard and God had rewarded me with an ability to move my wife into a log house, the meanest on the domain, and live on corn bread and potatoes, if need be; that instead of being terror-stricken by the sound of the enemies' artillery at Putney it girded me with

## The Putney Community

Herculean strength, and nothing less than the challenge of Roderick Riu expressed my mind, "'Tis come on, come one, come all." Admitting that he was right in his suspicion that you were rather arbitrary, this was no time for parley or explanation; the enemy was invading the country, and we must now turn our attention to defense. I said that our subjects were yet undisciplined, ignorant and incapable of a perfectly free government, and that at a proper time I would sanction the project of communicating with you on the subject of national polity, to which he assented and expressed himself as greatly relieved.

After arousing them somewhat with my spirit they heard me with considerable interest. I spread out before them the honors, pleasures and privileges of the station to which the Commander-in-chief had nominated them. I said that you had authorized me to act by like nomination, and my business was to see that my district be put in a proper state of defense; and that I had now come as God's special ambassador to warn him to his post. As evidence of my commission I referred him to the authority with which I was enabled to speak, and the notable miracle wrought through me the day before in casting the Devil out of Hamilton's wife and restoring her to health.

I told him that I suspected he was not in the spirit of association; that I could take no more promises, nor could the government rely upon him without more particular examination and acquaintance with his state of mind. They agreed positively, and I think earnestly at the time, that they would visit us that week for this purpose, and that Hamilton should come the week following. But after I left, exclusiveness again got possession of Cook. He told Hamilton he stood ready to break with Noyes and Gould; did everything to hinder Hamilton from coming and to stop further arrangements in respect to

## **Fusion of Perfectionists in Central New York**

Oneida; wrote Abbott to go to Worden's instead of Oneida; and drew up a constitution for an association in his region without concentration. But God has completely foiled him. His own friends are disgusted with his opposition and his numerous foolish and conflicting plans. Even Worden has kicked out of his traces already. Hamilton and wife came according to engagement, stayed five days, and proved most satisfactorily that they are worthy of our confidence. His mother will visit us next week. Hamilton left here this morning to capture the remainder of Cook's forces, if any stragglers can be found.

Hamilton and myself visited Foot yesterday; found he had been quite sick, and had again moored his vessel alongside of the wharf of isolation, all I think in consequence of the firing at Putney. He will not promise to loose his boat again without a fresh revelation.

The Beaver Meadow company have arrived. They dedicated their house on Sunday, and the unprecedented glory of God shone upon us. Half a dozen families I think would be ready to move on before spring, if Burt and I can prevail on Foot to hoist sail in time.

I have devoted nearly all my time to the Kingdom of God since I saw you until I am out of provisions and not a dollar in purse, and yet never felt so rich. Burt has been the only man I could rely upon in case of attack even in externals. Am greatly relieved now with Hamilton in the free love department.

Myself and wife have stood like Ishmaelites, every man's hand against us. The intrigues of the Devil have been resorted to in full. At times all men have forsaken us. But I have been able to rejoice in the darkest times that your dispersion and apparent overthrow has only increased my interest and determination to sustain you, and that your orders shall be as promptly executed when issued from the Tombs of New York



## The Putney Community

as from the White House at the Capitol. I exceedingly rejoice that though all men forsake the cause I have never felt the first symptom of exclusiveness, misgiving or fear about our success since last September, and I glory in the sight that what we are binding on earth is also bound in heaven.

I think we could get above families here and build association house next summer, if Foot would cut loose within a month. I have little expectation that he will unless cured of exclusiveness, which I believe stands in the way of his wife. Had good fellowship with them yesterday. Made him acknowledge that you might not have intended more than God did with Abraham in offering up Isaac, and admit to his wife that he did not know but some such test might be useful on the subject of exclusiveness.

I do not expect blind men to distinguish colors. Believe I could put them through the test, and they would with Hamilton begin to see as gods. What say you? If I have a fair prospect, will you sustain me? . . .

Having formed a spiritual nucleus I have promised Burt I would move mildly in my department. But he does not understand that our success as well as providing a safe retreat for your Putney troops (if need be) depends upon above enterprise. Can I hear soon through Brother Cragin?

Want to answer your wife's letter, but have not time. Should you deem best, you might send her this as substitute.

In haste, your most obedient

W. C. G.

To J. H. N., Commander-in-chief.

### NOTE FROM MRS. GOULD

I have just read my husband's letter, and fully endorse all he says in it. I feel one with you and the persecuted saints of



## **Fusion of Perfectionists in Central New York**

Putney. I am not one of them that draw back to perdition. The more I lose, the more I find I gain. I believe I have put everything I had on the altar, but if I find anything hid I will put that on also. I rejoice that my character has gone by the board, and am not afraid of the result.

Yours in like faith,

C. GOULD.

## Chapter 35

### THE CALL TO ONEIDA

NOYES TO HARRIET A. NOYES

New York, January 24, 1848.

**D***EAR Harriet:*

Communications from Putney continue to be cheering. I am especially glad to hear that Mother has returned to you in body and spirit. She has learned long ago to say of God, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." I hope she is now learning to say of man, such as our Brattleboro friends, "Though they save me, yet will I not trust in them." Our real friends are in heaven. God is our true adviser. He will help us faithfully without requiring us to forsake the truth.

I think you all deserve praise at this time. Mr. Miller's patriotism and faithfulness are all I could wish. The firmness of the Bakers is admirable. All that have planted themselves on the truth seem to be standing more firmly and unitedly than ever. I hope to hear good news at last from Emma and Helen. Their captivity must have an end.

You will see by the enclosed letter from Burt that a new door is opening for us. When I think how opportunely you and I went west and started the association movement, and how the spirit and providence of God have followed in the track of the plan which I proposed for concentrating on Oneida, I am ready to imagine that God has been preparing to trans-

## The Call to Oneida

plant us from Putney, as he transplanted the gospel from New Haven at the beginning. I have determined to go to Oneida (probably this week), and see what can be done there. The Association commencing will need my help, and whether we join our forces with theirs or not my visit there will be profitable.

I should prefer, if possible, to keep our foothold in Putney, and also to establish a post in this city. But if the reprobates continue to reign in Putney, it will not be wise to push our advance into this city. That would be leaving a hostile fortress in our rear, which is contrary to the rules of strategy. Our better way will be to make a lateral movement and join our friends in Oneida. You who are in the disputed territory will take these things into consideration, and speak your mind. I see much reason to think that a strong Association can be gathered at Oneida in a short time. Sherwood is ready to go, and build for the new gathering as he did for us. I shall probably write more certainly on these matters when I have seen the field opening before us.

Yours,

J. H. NOYES.

### NARRATIVE OF JONATHAN BURT

The third day after my letter was sent to Noyes our hearts were made glad by his arrival. He found us at work wheeling dirt to stop a leak in the dam caused by high water. In the evening we all assembled in the new house to hear his story. He explained to us the principle of Male Continence, rehearsed the circumstances that led to its discovery, and finally frankly opened to us the fact that they had at Putney stepped over the marriage bounds and introduced a new relation between the sexes. He spoke in a spirit and manner that evinced great purity of thought and feeling, and though the subject was new

## The Putney Community

to me I had data in my spiritual experience which enabled me to accept what he presented as God's truth; and at the close of the meeting I so expressed myself. The women were somewhat disconcerted, but on the whole there was a good deal of candor. . . .

The next day, which was Saturday, Mr. Noyes went to Dr. Gould's at Oneida Depot, where it was supposed he would find a warm welcome. Sunday morning Mr. Nash, young Waters and I went to the village expecting a good meeting. On our first arrival the Doctor invited me to a private interview. He immediately informed me that his former difficulties with Mr. Noyes had been revived, and he entered into a labored argument to persuade me to take sides with him against what he termed Mr. Noyes's "restraint upon personal liberty." I told him plainly that I could not yield to his persuasions, that my confidence in Mr. Noyes was not to be shaken, and that I desired to hear his own reason of the matter. When we returned to the house I expressed my wish, and Mr. Noyes at once said that as Dr. Gould had had a private conference with me it was no more than fair that he should have one too. We accordingly retired into another room. Said Mr. Noyes: "The Doctor came into the Putney family in a licentious spirit, claiming sexual freedom when he was not under our discipline, and I held him in check. He has revived the contest, accusing me of interference with individual freedom." I at once said, "That explains the whole matter. I need no more to satisfy me where the right is." Mr. Noyes then reported to me his debate with Gould just previous to our arrival, which was about as follows:

Dr. Gould: I have great influence with Perfectionists in New York State, and if you do not yield to me on this point, I will throw the cars off the track.

Mr. Noyes: You meanly attempt to take advantage of me

## The Call to Oneida

in the day of adversity, but you will find that adversity and prosperity are both the same to me when truth is at stake. God shall judge in this matter. I appeal to his tribunal.

Dr. Gould: It may take God a good while to decide.

Mr. Noyes: He may decide speedily.

Just as this last sentence was uttered, we rapped at the door and were admitted.

My conference with Mr. Noyes lasted over an hour, and there was great flow of heart between us. He gained my thorough confidence, and I gave in my adherence to him as an inspired leader. At the close of our talk Mr. Noyes took from his pocket a small bag which contained five hundred dollars in ten dollar gold pieces, and gave it a whirl upon the bed, saying, "There, Mr. Burt, if that will help you in any way, it is at your service. I offer it as my first contribution to a New York Community." This was indeed aid from a source I had not expected. I accepted it thankfully as from the Lord. I then told him that as other places seemed closed I would undertake to make him a home at my house. On my return to the rest of the company I told Dr. Gould that I had made my election, that I must break fellowship with him entirely, and that I should cleave to Mr. Noyes. We then returned home, Mr. Noyes going with us and staying that night at the new house. I deposited the gold in my drawer, and in the morning invited Mrs. Burt to look at it. She asked me where I got it. I told her. "But," said she, "what have you given for security?" I said, "Not anything. Mr. Noyes has given it to me as a first contribution to the Community interest." I then said that I wanted him to come into our family and make it his home for a time. She said at once that she had no objections. The next day a good parlor stove was purchased and set up, and Mr. Noyes took his abode in our best room, while Mrs. Burt did everything she could to make it pleasant and comfortable. Here



## The Putney Community

Mr. Noyes wrote his *Bible Argument Defining the Relations of the Sexes in the Kingdom of Heaven*.

We had at this time a young woman as helper in our family, a sister to our neighbor Hubbard. She had an intelligent mind. During the early part of Mr. Noyes's stay at my house she and Mrs. Burt read together his *Religious Experience*, which they found in a file of *The Perfectionist*. It interested them deeply, and when they had finished the reading they sought an interview with Mr. Noyes. The result was that they both came out with an open confession of Christ as a savior from sin and had a bright spiritual experience.

At about the same time my brother Horace, whose insanity had continued without abatement, was miraculously cured under Mr. Noyes's influence. This was an occasion of much rejoicing. . . .

We continued for some weeks to pass through thrilling scenes. . . . The Community assumed my debts, which indeed proved to be more than I expected. Come to look the matter squarely in the face it was clear that I had moved in an enterprise which I could not have carried through. The Community needed a leader with qualifications which I did not possess; and the coming of Mr. Noyes was highly seasonable not only for my personal deliverance but also for the success of the general movement toward an association in Central New York.

Noyes arrived at Burt's on January 26, 1848. On the 28th he quieted Horace Burt. The same evening Noyes went down to Gould's at Oneida Depot. Gould showed his colors, and Noyes separated from him. The next day, Sunday the 29th, Burt, Nash and Waters went down to Gould's to fetch Noyes back. Noyes afterward said that, if they had not come, he would have taken the cars to New York City.

## The Call to Oneida

NOYES TO GEORGE CRAGIN

Oneida, February 4, 1848.

*Dear Brother Cragin:*

My operations in Gould's case work well every way. His character was universally bad and sinking among believers. The blow that was struck last Sunday is echoed heartily from all quarters. The Beaver Meadow regiment rejoices unanimately, Hamilton and family are righted, and Burt's visit has brought Cook into the ranks again. He is coming with the rest from Syracuse on a visit here next Sunday. Burt has written to Foot, and he also is expected. Everything conspires to bring about concentration here. I have the enthusiastic confidence of all now on the ground. They see for themselves and by sure tokens, that I am as hostile as ever to licentious spirits, and that my "tyranny" instead of being an annoyance is highly useful in protecting them from the wolves. . . .

Now for the temporalities which I promised to write about. I have found a place for you, unless your shrewd eyes detect objections. Do you recollect a small timber house across the road from Brother Burt's? There is one comfortable room with buttery, a back kitchen for summer, a bed-room upstairs, a good barn, a small shoemaker's shop, and twenty-three acres of land included mostly in the long bend of the creek, good-looking meadow with a small wood lot. Crane, the present occupant, offers to sell his interest in it for five hundred dollars, and to give possession within one week from the time of the bargain. This land, like most of the lands in this region, is held by articles from the State pledging to give deeds when the purchase money is paid. About four hundred dollars remain to be paid, but the State does not call for this so long as the interest is kept up; also there is a probability that the present Legislature will throw off one-quarter of its claim. I think you

## The Putney Community

can live at least as comfortably there with your children as the Beaver Meadow folks live in their shanty (and I assure you they are happy), until we can build a Chateau. There is some romance in beginning our Community in the log huts of the Indians. But your house, though built of hewed logs and by the Indians, is well plastered and papered, warm and pleasant, not to be despised by those who are cramped up in accommodations as small as Sherwood's. And the money which we should have to pay for one year's rent of a decent house in New York City will make you the owner to all intents of quite a little farm. Brother Burt's plans for water-power will be furthered by this purchase, and he will make common interest with you in managing your land. As to occupation, he wants just such a man as you are to take charge of his accounts and superintend scattered business so that he can devote himself to his mills; and the Community will need Mrs. Cragin's help as teacher of children, for which purpose the little shoe-shop seems to have been constructed. We can send to Putney for furniture, and Brother Burt will provision you. All here will receive you with acclamations. Shall I close the bargain?

If you decide to come, I shall probably send for my wife and the children. Harriet will go into the yoke with Mrs. Burt, who needs her help and is quite sure to prove a fine woman under right influences.

By these movements the original four-square nucleus of the Putney Community will be re-united, and will give tone to the Oneida Community.

James Baker has written me inquiring whether he had not better move here. There is a farm of fifty-six acres with a log house a short distance north of the mill, adjoining lands already engaged for the Community, which can be had (subject as usual to the claim of the State) for about six hundred



THE SHOE SHOP





## The Call to Oneida

dollars. I think he will come, and in process of time Brother Burt will put him in a grist-mill.

If Baker comes, he can bring my wife and our children and attend to the transportation of the goods for us all.

Hatch says, "The king-bee has lit, and the swarm is coming." And truly it seems to be so. Prospects open rich, though for the present we must make up our minds for soldiers' fare. We have good luck in everything so far. I feel that the divine energy is pushing us forward, and therefore I feel safe in an adventurous course.

Hoping for a re-union of our families here soon, I remain as ever,

Yours,

JOHN H. NOYES.

Pencil note by J. H. Noyes on the back of the photograph of the Shoe-shop:

The building here photographed was originally a shoe-shop, where Mr. Crane, from whom we bought the Cragin meadow and the Log Hut, made shoes. It stood near the apple tree on the south of the bridge. We used it at first for a meeting-house on Sundays and a school-house on other days. Mrs. Cragin kept school there. Afterward it was moved up on the higher ground, and became an attachment to the Log Hut. J. H. N. occupied it some time. When the trap business had grown big and wanted a store room for traps, this building was moved over east of the Mill, where it now stands. Finally the traps required larger quarters, and this building was converted into a paint-shop. There J. H. N. with Arabelle's class of girls put and puttied the glass into the sash for the big brick Mansion house in the summer of 1861. Whoever knows anything more about this historical edifice will please write below.

J. H. N.

April 11, 1869.

## The Putney Community

(Additional notes:)

It was used as an Architect's office by E. H. H. in making the drawings for this present house.

D. P. Nash occupied it as a tin-shop for a year or more.

NOYES TO HARRIET A. NOYES

Burt's, February 4, 1848.

*Dear Harriet:* . . .

My entering in here has been prosperous in every way. The enterprise of association which we set on foot in September, though moving on with sufficient signs of God's purpose, was dragging heavily. Brother Burt was bearing up nobly but under mountain-embarrassments, and the Beaver Meadow regiment, the first and only troops on the ground, were in a low, discouraged state. After Burt declared himself fully with me and against Gould on the subject of subordination I put in his hands five hundred dollars, half the proceeds of the U. S. stock which we sold in New York, believing that it would prove more safe and profitable than U. S. funds, because it was secured by the pledge of the everlasting Government. Thus I was enabled to infuse life into the movement.

[After giving some account of the Beaver Meadow company Noyes continues:]

I opened my whole heart to them. Some of my disclosures of course caused temporary suffering, but God found means to convince all that I am not walking after the flesh. I lectured and talked abundantly, and the result is a joyful quickening of all, full confidence in one another, increasing hope. Mrs. Burt, hitherto not a believer, is yielding. She gives me liberty to invite you and Theodore as soon as I please. I have found a place for Cragin, and have written to him for his judgment about coming. On the whole I think you had better come. You

## The Call to Oneida

will be needed with me in laying the foundations of the new Association.

NOYES TO GEORGE CRAGIN

Oneida, February 15, 1848.

*Dear Brother Cragin:*

I have received an answer from Harriet, and have her approbation of our plan. . . . I think both parties will do best to move at the same time. . . .

If you have generalship enough to bring the whole party safely to the Oneida depot at 3 o'clock P. M. on the first day of March, I will be there with a team to thank you and bring you to our new home. You will all probably stop in Albany one night, as the children will not be able to go directly through. In that case my experience of the crowd and confusion on the boat at the crossing of the railroad-cargo would suggest the expediency of staying at the Greenbush depot, or at least leaving the women and children there till after the crowd has crossed. The only places of difficulty will be Springfield and Albany. If you carry all safe through those whirlpools, and keep the children in the cars at momentary stations, you will get along well.

Haile, Keeler and Foot are here this morning. Corwin is expected today. Busy times!

Yours truly,

JOHN H. NOYES.

NOYES TO HARRIET A. NOYES

Oneida, February 15, 1848.

*Dear Harriet:*

Good news comes with every letter from Putney. God is working gloriously both there and here. Well, my heart is big enough for two great blessings at once.

## The Putney Community

I cannot stop to tell you all that is going forward here. I need you to keep the records for me, and report to Putney. I thank God that there is a prospect of your being with me again soon. . . .

I shall trust you to select and bring on such things as you and I shall need. We have no occasion for house furniture of any kind. I will only suggest that it will be well to bring most of our stock of old letters from New York Perfectionists, and as many of the bound volumes of our past publications as you have room for. Also bring as many of my tinkering tools as Woolworth can spare conveniently.

I shall write to Mr. Miller again soon in answer to his last. At present I am very busy with "customers." Haile and Keeler from Genoa have just started for home with a load of our spiritual goods. . . .

Yours faithfully,

JOHN H. NOYES.

Abandonment of Putney was finally resolved upon. Purchases of land and buildings adjoining Burt's were immediately begun, and soon a domain of one hundred and sixty acres with two houses and two log cabins was secured. The disbursement of twenty-eight hundred dollars in gold within a few weeks in that frontier settlement gave rise to fantastic tales. One had it that none other than Santa Ana himself had come into the neighborhood to settle.

A rough board shanty was quickly built for a young men's dormitory. During the summer and fall the "Mansion House," a structure sixty by thirty-five feet with three stories and garret, was erected. Erastus H. Hamilton, who had studied architecture at Syracuse, made the plans and superintended the work. The saw-mill and timber on the domain provided the materials. All the work except the plastering was done by the Community. Most of the lathing was done by the women. When free from other duties all worked merrily on the house, and many valuable lessons in making industry attractive were learned. The building was ready for use before winter.



THE OLD LOG HUT





## The Call to Oneida

The members of the Putney Community migrated to Oneida as rapidly as accommodations could be provided: March 1, 1848, Harriet A. Noyes and her son Theodore, George Cragin, Mary E. Cragin and their children George E., Charles, John and Victor; March 22, Lemuel H. Bradley, Sarah A. Bradley; April 1, James L. Baker, Catherine Baker and their daughter Mary; May 6, Henry W. Burnham, Lois Knowles; May 13, John Leonard; June 1, Abby Burnham and her son Edwin; June 16, John L. Skinner, Harriet H. Skinner and their son Joseph; July 19, Stephen R. Leonard, Fanny M. Leonard and their daughter Charlotte, Ellen Baker; October 3, Sarah Burnham; April 1849, Louisa Tuttle; May 24, Polly Noyes, Harriet A. Hall, Philena Baker; June 14, John R. Miller, Charlotte A. Miller and their children Tirzah, George and Helen, Sally Cobb, William A. Hinds; June 26, George W. Noyes, Helen C. Noyes and their son Arthur; August, Daniel Knowles; October 1, William H. Woolworth, Emma A. Woolworth and their daughter Helen, Achsah R. Campbell. Later a small family was reestablished at Putney as a branch of the Oneida Community, to which its history belongs. It was finally withdrawn and the real estate sold on December 15, 1859.

These thirty-one adults and fourteen children constituted the entire roster of the Putney Community at the time of the migration. They became the nucleus around which Perfectionists from Central New York, Northern Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other places gathered as they heard the call of Bible Communism.

"Thus the Putney Community died and rose again," wrote Noyes in *The First Annual Report of the Oneida Community*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Oneida Community lasted from 1848 until 1880 inclusive. On January 1, 1881, it was reorganized as a joint-stock company, and the experiment in Bible Communism came to an end.—G. W. N.











## Date Due

<del>APR 30 '51</del>	<del>NOV 7 '49</del>	
<del>MAY 8 '55</del>	<del>DEC 1 '74</del>	
<del>MAY 16 '55</del>	<del>DEC 10 '51</del>	
<del>FEB 3 '56</del>	<del>DEC 10 '74</del>	
<del>FEB 18 '58</del>	<del>APR 21 '77</del>	
<del>APR 24 '55</del>		
<del>[REDACTED]</del>		
<del>[REDACTED]</del>		
<del>FEB 22 '61</del>		
<del>MAY 9 '61</del>		
<del>JUN 7 '64</del>		
<del>NOV 24 '64</del>		
<del>NOV 30 '84</del>		
<del>APR 15 '85</del>		
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<del>MAY 18 '81</del>		
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